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estyle Fascism
by Robert Bork

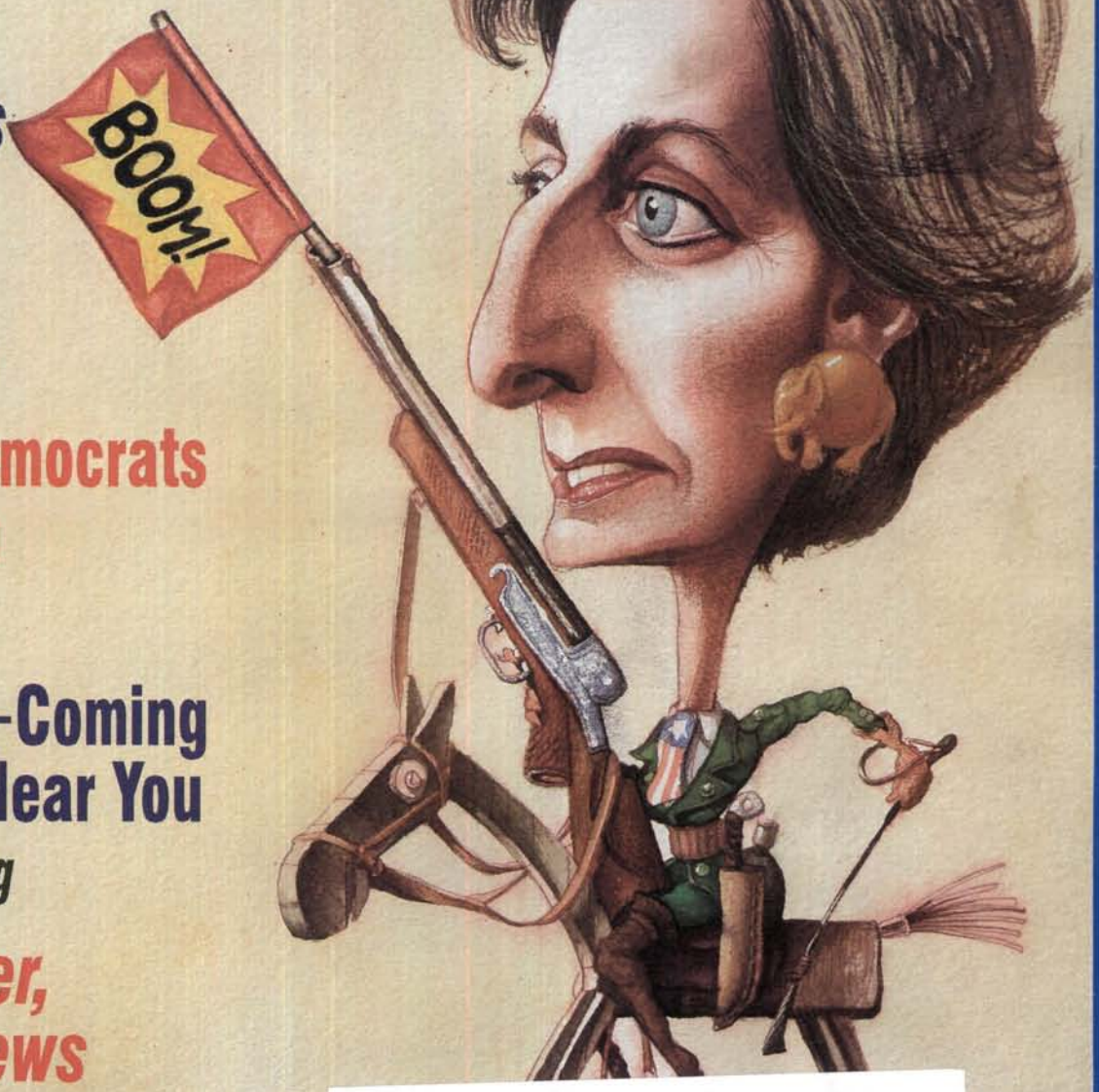
Lost in Cyberspace — Special Internet Issue

NATIONAL REVIEW

Going Nowhere

Christie Whitman's Static Politics

Kate O'Beirne



Why the Democrats Always Win

Rich Lowry

Secession—Coming To a Town Near You

Thomas Fleming

God, Mailer, And the Jews

Michael Medved
David Gelernter

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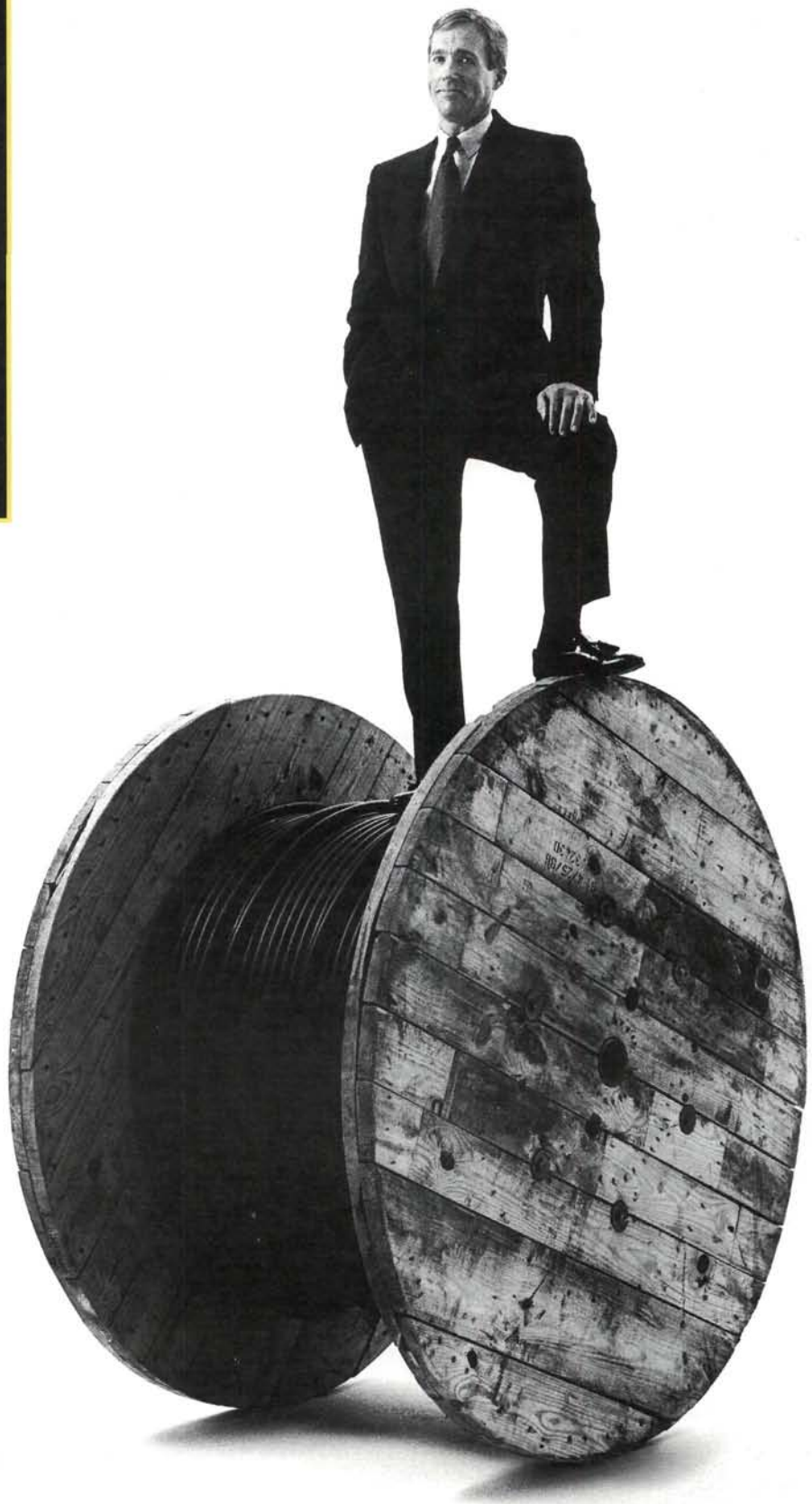

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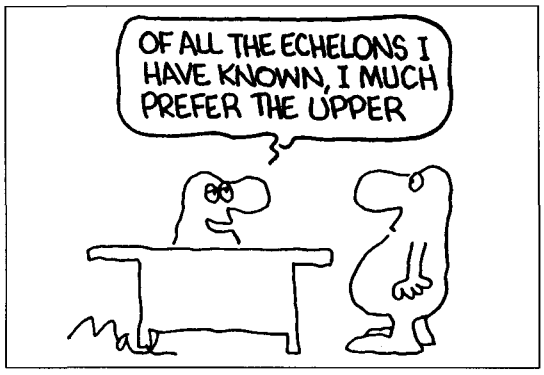

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LETTERS

Lengthy Disputes

Cheers to James Gardner for his review [June 30] of *Mason & Dixon* by Thomas Pynchon—surely one of this century's most overrated writers. As an undergraduate, I had an English professor who included *Gravity's Rainbow* on the syllabus. After fifty bizarre and largely incomprehensible pages, I gave up. The book's preoccupation with bodily functions alone made it difficult: Should I wait until after dinner to read, or read first and risk eating with all those earthy images in mind?

Outside of literary circles and academia, I have met no one who reads Pynchon. His notoriety must be the result of the same pretense to artistic sensibility that lets art galleries get away with selling rubbish for $25,000 simply because it's signed by an alleged artist. The Tacitus aphorism *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* (Whatever is obscure is highly held) reminds me of Anna Russell's line, "For the singer who is tone deaf, contemporary music is the thing; the more off-key you become, the more contemporary you sound."

Warren T. Taylor
Atlanta, Ga.

Mr. Gardner's "review," in which he admits to reading a mere fifty pages, is a disservice to your readers, and should diminish whatever reputation as a critic he has heretofore enjoyed. Not content with merely dodging the assignment, he compounds his crime by questioning the sincerity of critics who praised the book, as most did. You should demand the return of whatever fee you paid for Mr. Gardner's sham.

Richard Cassola
Pinellas Park, Fla.

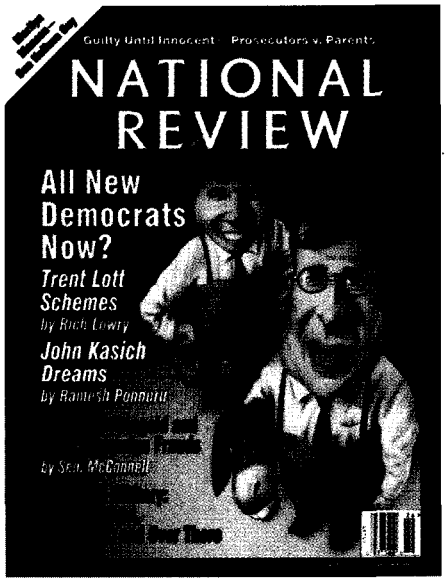
Thanks so much for Mr. Gardner's luminous review. How many other reviewers would have the good sense to stop after the first fifty pages of a ponderous and boring book? There are people who love books, and people who say, "I'm trying to get through such-and-such." The I'm-trying-to-get-through crowd do not love books, they love bragging about endurance of pain. A good novel usually runs 200 to 275 pages. If it runs to, say, 315, the reader can usually sense an excess of plot sidetracks and landscape descriptions. Chris Offutt's 317-page *The Good Brother* is a good novel. It would have been an excellent one had someone trimmed fifty or so pages of Montana-countryside descriptions. Streamlining always improves a novel.

Ralph Vitale Jr.
Arlington, Va.

We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity or length.

Secondhand Facts?

As a longtime NATIONAL REVIEW fan I am disappointed by "Smoke Rings" ["The Week," June 16], concerning the Harvard University study on the cardiovascular effects of secondhand smoke. First, you say it is unclear how many of the nurses in the study were themselves smokers or ex-smokers. Only nurses who had never smoked, and who were free of diagnosed coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke, and



cancer, were included, so this should be very clear indeed. The secondhand-smoke study is part of a twenty-year ongoing study of female nurses. The relationship between passive smoking and CHD has been examined since 1982 in nurses who had never smoked and had no CHD. The study also controlled for a broad range of behavioral and dietary factors.

Second, you state that secondhand smoke was such a minor aspect of the study that the amount of exposure to it was inadequately assessed. Yet, beginning in 1982, Harvard scientists specifically focused on the effects of secondhand smoke. The questionnaire did not ask only whether the nurses had "never," "occasionally," or "regularly" been exposed to smoke; rather, it asked for details about exposure to smoke both at work and at home, as well as the number of years lived with a smoker.

Third, suggesting that the timing of the study's publication may have been intended to coincide with jury selection for a class-action suit is, at best, far-fetched. Drs. Ichiro Kowachi and Graham A. Colditz, study researchers, say it's almost impossible that anyone involved in the study could have known of the pending suit while the paper was being revised for publication. The seven respected scientists of the study concluded that the data consistently suggest increased risk of CHD for non-smoking women regularly exposed to secondhand smoke.

There is also a remarkable similarity between "Smoke Rings" and "Secondhand Smoke-and-Mirrors," found on Steven J. Milloy's "Junk Science" web page (www.junkscience.com). *NR* should be wary of relying on a source that considers the *New England Journal of Medicine* a purveyor of junk science. In labeling the Harvard study "junk science," you may be inadvertently junking all science.

Elizabeth Whelan, President
American Council on Science and Health
New York, N.Y.

We are glad that Dr. Whelan is also a follower of the "Junk Science" page, but disappointed that she is incapable of grasping the distinction between the real risks of smoking and silly claims about the dangers of inhaling tiny amounts of secondhand smoke. We respect Dr. Whelan's work on many subjects, but when it comes to tobacco she loses her grip on reality. The Harvard researchers themselves report that "exposure to passive smoking was assessed by self-report and only at baseline" (p. 2,378). This, in a study which re-examined the health condition of the subjects at two-year intervals from 1982 onward. The researchers relied on a single self-report of exposure to secondhand smoke with no effort to follow up or to check the original self-report. It may have been a serious study on many matters, but not on secondhand smoke. Equally preposterous is Dr. Whelan's claim that the researchers controlled for confounding factors. They had the data on four sets of established risk factors—trans-fatty-acid levels, weight change, night-shift work, and height—and made no attempt to control for any of those when making the secondhand-smoke estimate. The study has no data on sociability, the lack of which, the Journal of the American Medical Association *reported recently, poses a risk "comparable in magnitude" to that of smoking. That's real smoking, not getting whiffs of others' smoke. We never said that those who did*

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the study influenced the timing of the publication, just that the publisher, the American Heart Association, timed it to coincide with the court case. After quickly accepting the article for publication, the editors let ten issues of their journal go to print before they published it. And the AHA is, after all, one of the funders of the state attorneys' general litigation.

—ED.

From House to House

Ramesh Ponnuru ["Dreamer on a Caffeine Jag," June 30] is probably too young to remember this, but it is not true that "nobody has ever moved from the House to the White House." James A. Garfield was a member of the House when he ran for President in 1880. He had been elected senator from Ohio, but was never seated. Alas, we may never see his like again, at this rate.

John McClaughry
Concord, Vt.

I thank Mr. McClaughry for the correction. The good news for Rep. John Kasich is that Garfield hailed from his home state. The bad news is that he was assassinated in his first year in office. —RP

Message in a Bottle

While Jeffrey Hart's "Messages from the *Titantic*" [June 2] is thoughtful as always, I think he errs in stating that the *Titanic* was radically new and different. Ships only fractionally smaller were well established on the Atlantic in 1912; the *Olympic* was the *Titanic*'s virtual twin and served for over 25 years. Nor was Captain Smith's behavior "inexcusable." Liners had not been bumping into icebergs, and 22.5 knots was *not* inordinate (the *Mauretania* was much faster, and Smith was not trying to excel her). I am perplexed also that Mr. Hart would censure Smith for being "not even on the bridge" when the collision occurred. Even WFB is not on the bridge of *NR* 24 hours a day. Finally, it was First Officer Murdock who was in command and responsible for steering. Second Officer Lightoller was a gallant sailor who behaved impeccably. His lack of men for lifeboats was owing, at least initially, to men simply refusing to go. Many thought the extra seats would be needed by women in the water—not realizing how fast 32-degree water kills. The sinking was really caused by a combination of incredible circumstances—though Mr. Hart's admonitions are worth thinking about.

Richard M. Langworth
Hopkinton, N.H.

Captain Smith's behavior in the preliminary sea trials and in leaving Southampton demonstrates that he was unaware of the displacement factor and turning behavior of the vessel. Perhaps the Olympic *was lucky. Though other liners had not been "bumping into icebergs," Smith had received ample warning that the icebergs were much further south that year than at any other time in his experience. For those particular conditions, the speed was excessive, and his absence from the bridge derelict. Second Officer Lightoller brandished a pistol to prevent men from boarding the partially empty boats.* —JH

Doubting Thomas

Gary L. McDowell's thoughtful piece on Thomas Hobbes and American constitutionalism ["Leviathan Harpooned," June 30] has much to be said for it. But the main thing to be said here is that it is *wrong on all the decisive issues*. Hobbes probably would not have recognized himself from my distinguished friend's account.

That laws should be just is not an invention of Hobbes's, but woven into the Western Christian tradition from the Decalogue and Aristotle onward: "An unjust law is no law at all," Cicero said, and Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas repeated. Rule of law is indebted to this Western higher-law tradition and to English common law back to Bracton and Magna Carta. It takes its rise from a number of overlapping and mutually reinforcing sources starting out from Aristotle's *Politics*. The argument there is that a regime of law is superior to that of any man, since he who asks the law asks God and Reason alone to rule—but when you ask a man to rule you add an element of the beast, because passion perverts the judgment of all rulers even when they are the best of men. James Madison and his associates understood this perfectly and designed the Constitution accordingly.

Hobbes knew these arguments but thought that England, in an age of constitutional confusion, religious fanaticism, and civil war, needed the iron fist of a sovereign to dictate terms of social order. Consequently, what he taught was not rule *of law*, but rule *by laws* under the absolute authority of a sovereign who was not himself under law or bound to observe it. Of course, following King James I's theory of the monarch's power under the British constitution, Hobbes thought it would be nice if the King obeyed his own laws—good PR, we would say. The chaps who thought the King under law were the good old common-lawyers whom Professor McDowell wants to implicate as enemies of law and liberty, led by Sir Edward Coke and John Selden in the parliamentary phase of the dispute over the nature of the Constitution as we have largely inherited it in this country.

The American heritage of constitutionalism descended not from the Stuarts and Hobbes, but from their opponents. By their efforts England alone of the major powers of Europe avoided absolute kingship in the seventeenth century, thereby saving rule of law and constitutionalism there at the time and for Western civilization and the world (Holdsworth) for the future. To label Hobbes totalitarian may be a bit anachronistic. But it is closer to the mark than to extol him as the father of modern constitutionalism.

Ellis Sandoz
Baton Rouge, La.

Professor Sandoz ranges far afield in his condemnations, and in the process confuses a great deal about the sources of American constitutionalism. Although I must respect his comments because of the source, I must disagree with his account and stand firmly by the gentleman from Malmesbury as a founder of modern constitutionalism. It is precisely in the sources to which Mr. Sandoz points—Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and the others, not least Sir Edward Coke—that one finds the essential dilemma that philosophers like Hobbes and John Locke faced. It was in the murky netherworld of scholasticism that those great writers and their followers found the tyranny of those who would seek to interpret the law and the Scripture by the duplicitous arts of the schoolmen. It was in the abuse of words, as Locke taught what he had learned from Hobbes, that one found the greatest dangers posed to freedom. Mr. Sandoz ignores the central point, which is that in Hobbes one finds a profound argument for the necessity of chaining judges to the intention of the sovereign lawmaker. It was this understanding that led Alexander Hamilton in The Federalist *to describe the Constitution as the embodiment of the "intention of the people"; this also moved Chief Justice John Marshall to conclude in* Marbury *v.* Madison *that the written constitution was "the greatest improvement on political institutions." These notions stem from a Thomas to be sure, but his name is Hobbes, not Aquinas.* —GLM

Reptilian Revulsion

I am writing to protest your June 2 cover depicting a dinosaur with grotesque buck teeth and stereotypical garb in an apparent Dick Gephardt outfit. It is in poor taste and a disgusting insult to all members of the Reptile-American community. A neighboring chameleon acquaintance, who cannot even be seen when sunning himself on your magazine, is also offended.

Leslie Spencer
Napa, Calif.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Without a Net

■ Ten years ago this September, I was present at a small conference in Britain to engage in a little crystal-ball gazing.

Our first guru was Norman Macrae, an economic journalist of distinction, who predicted the decline of Communism, the rise of Asian capitalism, and, almost as an afterthought, a sharp fall on Wall Street and world markets in "the next few months." But we need not worry, he assured us, since this correction of an overvalued market, if handled sensibly, would neither turn into a slump nor derail his other forecasts.

Wall Street fell the next month, etc.

Why do I mention this? Only because, in his London *Sunday Times* column yesterday, Norman Macrae predicted "a Wall Street crash . . . coming soon."

But will Clinton and Blair handle it as sensibly as Reagan and Thatcher?

■ Our special issue examines, among other things, whether the Internet is helping to hatch a new sort of human being and society. Our contributors differ: David Gelernter is a skeptic, Sven Birkerts thinks something is up.

On human identity, my sympathies go with Mr. Gelernter. From writers using a nom de plume to confidence tricksters, people have always misrepresented themselves. The Internet may make it easier. But does such misrepresentation deceive the deceiver and persuade him that his own personality is unstable, variable at will, etc.? I doubt it.

Its impact on society, however, may be more profound. Not because the Internet allows free speech—the U.S. Constitution as interpreted since the Sixties does that. An Internet trawl on politics will reveal everything from neo-Nazism to anarcho-capitalism, and on sex everything from 1950s cheesecake to "virtual" sado-masochism. But so will a trawl through your local bookshop.

What is different is that people think the government *could* regulate bookshops. But even before the Court rejected the Communications Decency Act, they felt the Internet's dispersion freed it from the ambit of regulation. It would be like trying to control all our telephone calls.

This feeling is only partly valid, but it is entirely significant. It means we are living in the first society in which citizens feel free speech is a fact of life outside state control—for good *and* ill.

■ In the mid Seventies, James Stewart trod the London stage in *Harvey*. It was Stewart's only West End performance, and the legions of his British fans turned out to fill the theater nightly.

On the night I saw him—and I believe every night—his first appearance led to five minutes of clapping. Indeed, this would have gone on indefinitely if he had not stepped out of character to acknowledge it with a familiar shy smile.

Audiences everywhere loved James Stewart. In America they felt—rightly, if biographical accounts are accurate—that he was, like George Bailey, a decent man striving to do good against odds that included his own inclinations.

Outside this country, he was seen as both a good man and a typical American. A blend of courage, modesty, and small-town decency made him something like an American ambassador to ordinary mankind.

That was no small contribution at a time when America was emerging as a superpower with an influence on every country. People felt that if Americans were indeed like him, then maybe its massive power was in good hands.

We shall be publishing a full appreciation of the life and career of James Stewart (also, incidentally, a great friend to this magazine) in our next issue.

■ A Hong Kong term for wealthy but recent fans of Peking—"Instant Noodle Patriots"—might also apply to Western friends of China like Sir Edward Heath. Except Mark Almond coined a word for the short-fused Sir Edward, then arguing for compromise with Saddam Hussein: "sado-pacifist."

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

NATIONAL REVIEW

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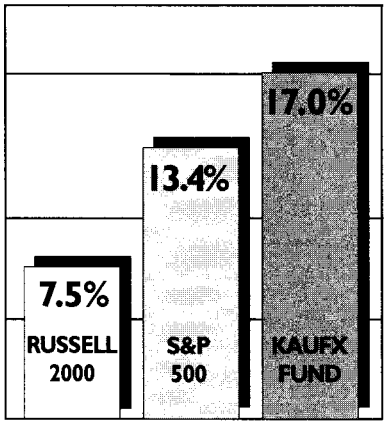

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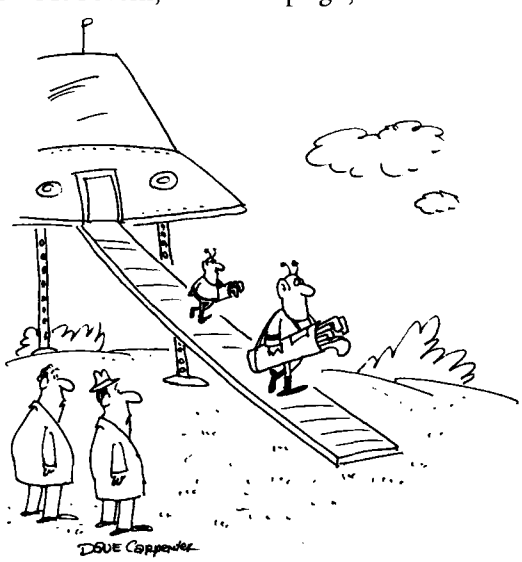
FOR THE RECORD

■ Ready for that tax cut? According to Joint Economic Committee data, federal tax receipts hit an all-time high at 21 per cent of gross domestic product in the fourth quarter of 1996 and the first quarter of 1997. When President **Clinton** took office, receipts were at 19 per cent. Says **Steve Forbes**, "Never in American history has one man taken so much from so many for so long." According to a **Luntz** Research poll, as many Americans would choose to be mugged as to face an IRS audit. . . . After listening to *Time* magazine's **Margaret Carlson** parrot the Democrats' line on taxes, CNN host **Frank Sesno** comments: "Margaret, you sound like you're writing speeches for **Dick Gephardt**."

■ According to Fox News poll, 59 per cent think the Clintons are not cooperating with Whitewater investigation. On another cover-up front: a plurality of 39 per cent say government is covering up UFO crash at Roswell. . . . Rep. **Tom Coburn** (R., Okla.), frustrated over recent GOP failures in Congress, flirts with idea of abandoning GOP to become independent. . . . Says **Lamar Alexander** of Massachusetts Gov. **William Weld**, whose appointment to be ambassador of Mexico is being blocked by **Jesse Helms**: "Bill Weld is an excellent example of the best leadership in our party." . . . Republicans credit Gov. **Christine Todd Whitman**'s decision to dispatch state police to monitor polling places in notoriously corrupt Jersey City with GOP Mayor **Bret Schundler**'s comfortable win in June run-off. . . . Rep. **Ron Dellums** (D., Calif.) pushes for the Post Office to issue a commemorative stamp honoring **Paul Robeson**, black Communist actor who was recipient of **Stalin** Peace Prize. . . . According to *Mediaweek*, **George Stephanopoulos** is consulting a memory specialist in an attempt to recall event from Clinton inner circle for his book.

■ Media Research Center survey finds that almost 30 per cent of criminals portrayed on TV are business owners or executives; career criminals are a distant second among TV bad guys at 10 per cent. . . . Not surprisingly, *Wall Street Journal* poll finds that only 37 per cent of Americans have a positive view of corporations. . . . Census Bureau reports that percentage of households headed by married couples continues to drop; last year married couples headed 53.7 per cent of all households, down from 56 per cent in 1990, 60.8 per cent in 1980, and 70.5 per cent in 1970. . . . In *The Assault on Parenthood* **Dana Mack** reports that comedian **Tracey Ullman** returned her child from California to England to escape outcome-based education. Says Ullman: "In California everything is s-o-o-o touchy-feely. They are into this silly outcome-based education, where it doesn't matter if she knew how to spell her name as long as she knew *who* she was. . . . What a crock! She was going to end up as dumb as a mud-flap."

■ *Time* columnist **Jack E. White** criticizes the idea of an apology for slavery as an "empty gesture," and instead calls for $24 trillion in reparations. . . . *USA Today* founder **Al Neuharth** writes: "What if Watergate had elected **McGovern**? The Cold War would have ended in the '70s rather than '90s. McGovern, in his campaign, debunked the invincibility of the so-called evil Soviet empire. Republican and Democratic Presidents preached that myth for four decades, until the USSR self-destructed." . . . Mount Rushmore has installed voting booths for visitors to vote for their favorite President; among recent Presidents, **Ronald Reagan** leads.



"It looks to me like they come in peace."

■ Saudi Arabian **King Fahd** and his heir Crown Prince **Abdullah**, notoriously anti-American, are trying to arrange a rapprochement with Teheran as a result of the May election of Iranian "moderate" **Mohammed Khatami** as the new president, the impasse in Israeli–Palestinian peace process, and the growing Israeli-Turkish alliance. . . . **Boris Yeltsin**, apparently recovering both physically and politically, celebrated first anniversary of his re-election by arguing that "this was the year when I felt that I had changed myself." But only 5 per cent of Russians approve of Yeltsin, according to pollsters, regarding him only as an alternative to a Communist comeback. . . . Rep. **Peter King** (R., N.Y.), leading Irish Republican Army advocate in Congress, says "There is no place in our society for gangs of armed wackos who threaten the government and scare the hell out of everybody," after informing the FBI of death threats from a U.S. militia group.

■ Town Hall, the Heritage Foundation–sponsored conservative website, celebrates second anniversary (www.townhall.com). . . . National Journalism Center, offering media training within the context of traditional values, is accepting applications for its fall internship session; 12-week session starts Sept. 15; deadlines for applications is August 29. Contact the NJC at 800 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002; phone 202-544-1333; fax 202-544-5368.

■ In *Men in Black*, **Newt Gingrich** is, along with such celebrities as **Danny Devito** and **Sylvester Stallone**, revealed to be a space alien masquerading as a human. Meanwhile, *Buffalo News* cartoonist **Tom Toles** points out **Al Gore** was born almost nine months after Roswell incident, has a "strange, unearthly way of speaking," and has "demonstrated an unusual ambition" to be elected "President of the most powerful nation on the planet." Could it be, Toles asks, "*just a coincidence?*"

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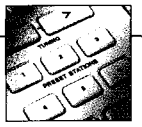

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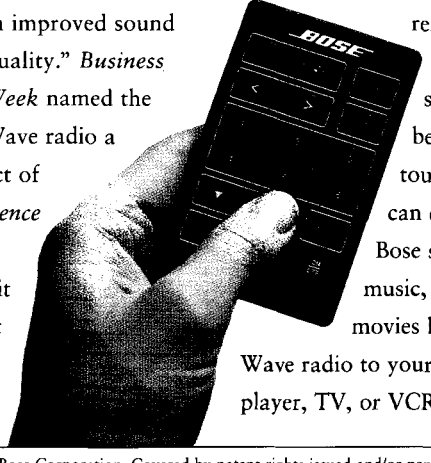

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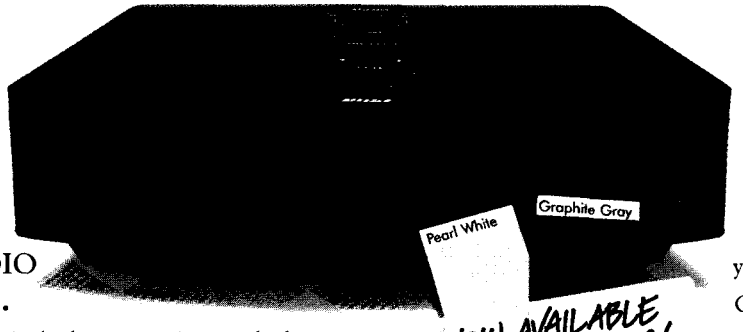

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THE WEEK

■ So sophisticated is the Mars Rover, it found Charlie Trie.

■ The premier accomplishment of the 104th Congress, welfare reform, is now endangered by changes passed by the Senate Finance Committee as part of the budget reconciliation bill. The Senate bill lets stand new Clinton Administration regulations that prohibit states from operating community-service programs to get welfare recipients working; redefines "work" to include training in such a way that no welfare recipient will be required to work through the end of the century; and gives the Administration authority to design an expensive 1970s-style work program. Heritage Foundation welfare expert Robert Rector calls it "the most decisive liberal victory in a quarter-century." The Senate changes still have to be reconciled with those passed in the House—not as hard a task as House reformers would have liked, thanks in part to Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich, who wanted the House bill to be as "bi-partisan" as possible. So, for now, welfare reform is in danger of being strangled in the cradle by its GOP progenitors, which raises the question: What exactly is the point of the Republican Party?

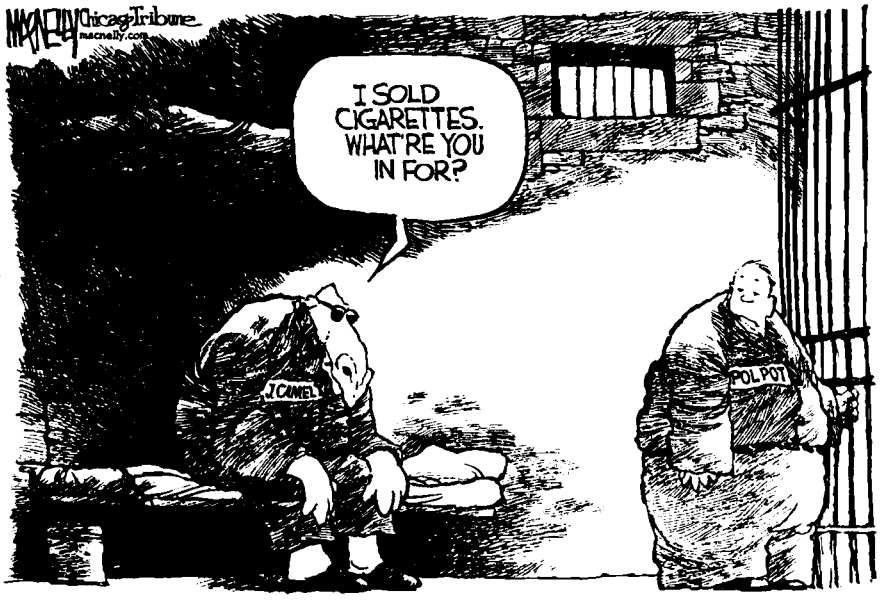
■ Washington's Willard Hotel will host a dinner re-creating the last meal served on the *Titanic*. Normally, the House leadership would go, but they know the menu already.

■ Rep. Mark Neumann (R., Wisc.) writes in summoning tones: "To Republicans looking for direction and a cause around which to unite, look no further." For those who aren't stirred by talk of balanced budgets, he offers "an even bigger vision": paying off the national debt with budget surpluses. Newt Gingrich, John Kasich, and Bill Paxon have endorsed the idea. To them it seems the path of least resistance: the Speaker can ingratiate himself with debt-obsessive backbenchers, while others dust off their talking points about the burden of debt on "our children," etc. Sure, it's better that any surplus be used to repay debt than to launch new domestic spending, but the Neumann program doesn't have a prayer of political success. Against proposals for a Marshall Plan for the cities or national health insurance, Republicans have to offer voters something more tangible than the knowledge that fiscal virtue is being practiced —something like tax cuts. Republicans adopted supply-side economics in the late Seventies to avoid this political dead-end. Instead of trying to retire the debt, they should retire this idea.

■ Thousands of UFO buffs trekked to Roswell, New Mexico, hoping to see strange, bald, slit-eyed beings, but James Carville was giving spin on Ken Starr.

■ With conservatives adrift in Washington, the sharks are circling. *NR* has already dealt with David Brock's turncoat confession in *Esquire*, pointing out that his favorable book on Hillary Clinton provoked no retribution from conservatives more serious than a cancelled dinner-party invitation, and that he still works for *The American Spectator*. Now Timothy Noah's column in *U.S. News* says that conservative journalists are "more interested in sheer party loyalty than in disseminating truth." Tell that to Trent Lott. Or to Ronald Reagan, whom WFB and George Will debated over the Panama Canal Treaty. The prize goes to Jacob Weisberg in *Slate*, who denounces the "conservative propaganda line" disseminated by *NR*, Rush Limbaugh, and Robert Novak's syndicated column: "A month ago, the word emanating from all the above-mentioned orifices was that Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah was betraying his party by co-sponsoring a health-care reform bill with Ted Kennedy. This week, it is that Gary Bauer, a leader of social conservatives, has allowed himself to become a tool of Gingrich's enemies by opposing the renewal of Most Favored Nation status for China." Net surfers beware: this is nonsense. Novak's column hasn't mentioned Hatch's health-care bill or Gary Bauer once this year, and while *NR* made principled arguments in support of MFN for China, it never attacked Bauer. If you want to study a pack at work, look at Brock, Noah, and Weisberg, not us-folks.

■ President Clinton's formal response to the Paula Jones suit denies everything, including being governor of Arkansas.



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■ *NR*'s last issue quoted ("The Week," p. 13) a scoop by Michael Chapman in *Human Events*, revealing that the KGB museum in Moscow displayed a picture of American atom-bomb scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer. "Oppenheimer was not a Soviet agent like [Klaus] Fuchs," the museum's director told Chapman. "But, yes, he did cooperate with Soviet intelligence. That's why his picture is here." Oppenheimer (who died in 1967) has been portrayed as a martyr to McCarthyism since his security clearance was yanked in 1954. But the museum display, the memoirs of KGB general Pavel Sudoplatov, and the recently declassified Venona transcripts all confirm Oppenheimer's dual loyalties. If newly uncovered data had established his innocence, you would have heard about it. So far, though, only *Human Events*, Eric Breindel in the *New York Post*, and *NR* have reported his guilt.

■ This just in: The National Cancer Institute confirms that power lines *still* don't cause cancer.

■ President Clinton came out with a tax plan that cuts the capital-gains tax from 28 to 27.7 per cent. The Republican response was unanimous: "The President Is Moving in Our Direction," blared a dozen press releases. And it's true enough—both parties are moving away from serious tax relief. In the Republicans' case, it's because they are unwilling to confront liberal "tax fairness" arguments head-on. Since those whom Democrats call "the rich" pay most of the taxes, however, this disability leaves Republicans with nothing to say in defense of just about any tax cut. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that their tax cuts are small and complicated—a consequence of letting interest-group politics and Clinton's spending demands dictate tax policy. Republicans used to own the tax issue because they advanced simple, bold proposals that plainly benefited everyone. But elephants can forget.

■ In particular, Republicans err badly if they allow capital-gains indexation to be sidetracked by the skirmishing over who gains and who loses from tax reduction. Indexation is a simple, moral issue: Tax law should not permit the government to cheat the taxpayers by debasing the currency through inflation and charging them for having done so. An honest government would not collect its revenues through non-indexed taxation. That some congressmen and journalists do not see this issue for what it is is a comment on how far we have fallen since the 1980s when Congress—not the Reagan Administration—insisted on indexing the income tax. It is no excuse to claim that indexing capital gains is too costly. At most, that argument can be used to decide how fast full indexation enters the tax code. Governments cause inflation. Not indexing capital gains means that taxpayers pay for phantom gains that they do not receive. Congress can reduce government's incentive to inflate and restore some honesty to the fisc. Do it now.

■ Eustace Tilley seems to have been gazing through his eyeglass at recent issues of NATIONAL REVIEW—a little dubiously, to be sure, but usefully. In the current *New Yorker*, John Cassidy, himself an immigrant, reviews the recent report on immigration from the National Academy of Sciences—and he can't help noticing that its conclusions differ considerably from what the media said it had concluded. His own account of it concludes that economists increasingly agree the net economic benefit from immigration is tiny; that it goes mainly to the immigrants themselves; that the native Americans who benefit are mainly rich and those who suffer are mainly the unskilled and poor; that immigrants (increasingly poorer and less skilled than natives) are a net fiscal drain upon society; and, finally, that in pursuit of the meager gains brought by continuing high levels of immigration we are risking balkanization. Commendable and brinky thoughts for immigrant Tina Brown.

■ In recent legal news, Californian Ms. Correen Zahnzinger sued her husband and former boyfriend of three years, Ms. Valeria Inga. The nature of her complaint is unclear.

■ For years Mexico was dominated by the aggressively secular and economically dirigiste Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The National Action Party (PAN) waged a lonely fight for religious and economic liberty. When the PAN began winning local elections in the early Eighties, the PRI responded by stealing its ballots and—more important—many of its issues. This prompted Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a PRI apparatchik who lost an internal power struggle, to form the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PDR), true to the PRI's leftist roots. In the election last week, the PAN won 7 state governorships out of 31, and 27 per cent of the popular vote nationwide, to the PRI's 38.9 per cent. The PDR won no governorships, 25.6 per cent of the vote, and the mayoralty of Mexico City. So whom does the Yankee press hail (the *New York Times* called it "the big winner")? The PDR, natch. Why? Because American reporters covered

Clinton v. *Jones*

What hotel did you say it was?
The President's forgotten.
Like others on the White House staff,
His memory is rotten.
No, "Paula" doesn't ring a bell,
But if that gal came knocking
(I'm being hypothetical),
Exposure could be shocking.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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What Coolidge Knew

In a boom not seen since Scott
Bunnyhugged and boozed a lot,
One would think a spending cut
Might prolong the motor's putt,
But the pedal's on the floor.
Cover your posterior.

—W. H. VON DREELE

the election from Mexico City, and because secular statists better fit their notions of reform than Catholic free-marketeers.

■ Our neighbors south of the border, then, may be developing a vigorous two-party system. Today Mexico; tomorrow the United States.

■ "The Statement of Christian Conscience—July 4, 1997" continues the attack on judicial usurpation launched by *First Things* last year. The Statement is signed by an array of prominent clergymen, including three Roman Catholic cardinals. It includes conventional indictments of "racism," "consumerism," and "neglect of the poor," all of which, it says, are "rampant in our society." The charge of "neglect" seems particularly frivolous in a society which since 1964 has spent $5 trillion on the poor. Such fustian was probably included to round up this or that signatory, which is a pity—for the core thrust of the Statement is a bull's-eye. Judicial usurpation ignores the "consent of the governed" upon which the Constitution is based. The usurpers also dangerously redefined "liberty" in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*: "The doctrine declared by the Court would seem to mean that liberty is nothing more nor less than what is chosen by the autonomous unencumbered self. This is the very antithe-

Right Data

ONE reason Alan Greenspan's job is so easy these days is the collapse of medical cost inflation. Over the past 12 months healthcare costs have risen by 3 per cent. That's half the rate of 1993 and nearly two-thirds below 1990.

Many give the credit to HMOs, which now enroll nearly one-quarter of the U.S. population. But the evidence is ambiguous. Although HMOs succeed in negotiating discounts with hospitals and doctors, much of the "savings" get shifted to traditional fee-for-service plans, which then cost more. If everyone were in managed care there would be no place to shift costs to, and medical inflation would be as bad as ever. "Thus," says a Congressional Budget Office study, "universal adoption of some forms of managed care could yield substantial one-time savings but might not address the longer-term cost issue."

We don't yet know what impact MSAs will have on medical bills. Since January 1, the self-employed and employees of small companies have been allowed to buy medical insurance with very high deductibles—up to $4,500 for a family. They can also fund a medical savings account. Tax deductions for MSA contributions are limited to 75 per cent of the deductible.

Medical bills can be paid by making a tax-exempt withdrawal from the MSA. Whatever is left compounds, tax deferred, until you reach 65. Then you can take the money out, pay taxes on it, and spend it as you please. Change jobs, and the MSA goes with you.

MEDICAL COST DEFLATION: HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

	Medical Care Inflation(%)	HMO Enrollment Total (Mils.)	HMO Enrollment As % of Population	MSAs
1980	11.2%	9.1	4.0%	0
1990	8.8	36.5	14.6	0
1993	6.0	45.2	17.5	0
1994	4.7	51.1	19.6	0
1995	4.5	58.2	22.1	0
1996	3.5	59.9	22.6	0
1997 est.	3.0	61.7	23.0	750,000(a)

Source: BLS; American Association of Health Plans.
a. Maximum permitted under current law.

Adverse selection is the first argument thrown up by critics. MSAs would allegedly attract only the healthy, who knew they wouldn't have to spend the money they had saved, and the rich, who wanted the tax deduction. That would leave sicker, poorer people to fend for themselves in ever more expensive insurance pools.

Early data belie this disaster scenario. In the first five months of 1997 Golden Rule Insurance Co. of Indianapolis sold over 26,000 high-deductible policies to people with MSAs. One-third were sold to professionals, but 35 per cent went to blue-collar workers and 16 per cent were bought by people who were previously uninsured. About 72 per cent were families; 10 per cent were single parents. More than forty other insurance companies have begun to offer some kind of MSA policy. Doctors unhappy with HMOs are interested in setting up networks that would be marketed in tandem with an MSA, and a New York City hospital is working to set up a debit card that would be linked to patients' MSAs.

The Kennedy–Kassebaum bill authorized a limited four-year test of the MSA concept. Congress also capped the total number of MSAs at 750,000. Within six months of their debut, however, an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 people have enrolled in MSA plans. Democratic members of Congress have introduced the Medical Savings Account Expansion Act of 1997 to remove the limits on MSAs that Sen. Kennedy insisted on last year. In the same spirit, a coalition of Democrats has proposed MSAs as part of its Medicare reform. Some pundits think Democrats will steal the issue and run in 1998 as if they had invented the idea of consumer choice. Whatever it takes.

—ED RUBENSTEIN

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sis of the ordered liberty affirmed by the Founders." The Statement understands that the "autonomous unencumbered self" is a fiction—and that such rulings are, at least, injudicious.

■ Taki Theodoracopulos, longtime contributor to *NR*, made some rude comments in the London *Spectator* on the marchers in New York's Puerto Rican Day Parade—he called them "fat, squat, ugly . . . and unbelievably loud." A sobered Mayor Giuliani reminded us all that "hate speech . . . can lead to violence." It's a good thing, then, that American papers no longer carry the speech of H. L. Mencken, who called "the majority" of Americans "botched and unfit: Irishmen starving to death in Ireland, Germans unable to weather the *Sturm und Drang* of the post-Napoleonic reorganization, Italians weed-grown on exhausted soil, Scandinavians run to all bone and no brain, Jews too incompetent to swindle even the barbarous peasants of Russia, Poland, and Roumania." Modern iconoclasts must be house-broken. Taki should take lessons from Michael Kinsley.

■ After 37 years, a Tailhook, and a Flinn, cartoonist Mort Walker's hand was forced. Under pressure from the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Portland Oregonian*, Walker will grudgingly send one of *Beetle Bailey*'s characters, the stodgy, golf-loving General Amos Halftrack, to sensitivity training. Halftrack's leers at his secretary, Miss Buxley, are no laughing matter. So Halftrack is off to a three-day training course, after which he will apologize to Miss Buxley: "It's just that I grew up with certain words and attitudes I thought were okay. I'm sorry." Coming shortly: *Popeye*'s spinach-can recycling episode and *Peanuts*' Marcie's coming-out special.

Supreme Faith

THE Supreme Court has drawn mixed reviews for striking down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Richard John Neuhaus sees the Court's action as a threat to religious liberty; George Will saw the law itself as a threat to the Constitution.

The law was a response to an earlier Supreme Court decision on the issue of whether the free exercise of religion exempts believers from laws that burden their faiths. The Court held that such exemptions need not be granted. The bi-partisan uproar that ensued led to RFRA, which restored exemptions based on faith—so that, for instance, anti-drug laws would not punish the Native American Church for sacramental use of peyote.

The act was not the best response to these concerns. The Court had made the right decision. It had not precluded state legislatures from accommodating religious believers on a case-by-case basis (as long as the exemptions were formally neutral among religions). Instead, the act created a sweeping, indeed conceptually boundless, right to faith-based exemptions enforceable by the federal judiciary. That is why Mr. Will, never a fan of promiscuous rights talk and rarely a fan of the courts as currently constituted, objected to RFRA.

A misguided law, however, is not necessarily an unconstitutional one. The demise of RFRA ought to inspire mixed feelings because of the grounds on which the Supreme Court struck it down. The Justices asserted that Congress, in second-guessing the Court's interpretation, had usurped its power. Mr. Will thinks with many others that this conclusion follows logically from the Court's discovery in *Marbury* v. *Madison* of the power of judicial review. But *Marbury* did not establish the supremacy of the Court over Congress; it established the supremacy of a written Constitution over both. It could not, therefore, relieve Congress of its duty to interpret the Constitution to the best of its ability.

This ruling—in which Justices Thomas and Scalia concurred—is a body blow to those conservatives who have been proposing that Congress use its power to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment (expressly granted in Section 5) to challenge wrongheaded Court decisions. RFRA was, in effect, an attempt to do just that. The same principle on which it was nullified could conceivably block efforts by Congress to restrict the courts' jurisdiction under Article III, Section 2—in which case only new constitutional amendments would counter a stubborn Court.

The road the Court has followed in this case has more twists and turns than usual, but the destination remains judicial rule. With this decision, and another leaving open the possibility of a constitutional "right" to assisted suicide, the Justices have deepened our constitutional crisis.

No Regrets

IN the looking-glass world of Washington it is probably a good thing that expectations for Sen. Fred Thompson's Asiagate hearings are so low. But the expectations may be right: witnesses are on the lam or ready to plead the Fifth; most of the revelations are seemingly already public; and the press corps is showing boredom with a scandal now in its 11th month. Still, the hearings deserve a better fate than the fizzle forecast for them.

It is a tribute to the cynicism of our media-driven politics that it is considered a great stroke of cleverness for the Administration itself to reveal that the President probably made fundraising calls from the White House (which everyone should have known as soon as Mr. Clinton said in a March press conference that he couldn't recall whether he had made them). Or pre-emptively tell selected reporters that the President himself was involved in giving special treatment to a shady contributor named Roger Tamraz. Lost in the coverage of all the game playing—who leaked what, who subpoenaed whom—is this scandal's still shocking bottom line: a massive effort in 1995–96 to

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prostitute the Executive Branch—and perhaps national policy—to the President's re-election.

President Clinton took an active interest in seeing that someone who may have been a foreign agent, John Huang, was placed at the center of his DNC fundraising operation. Huang—who we now know received more than one hundred classified briefings—seems to have spent as much time laundering money as raising it. Which didn't matter, as long as he produced dollars. He was part of a cast of Clinton associates, from Mark Middleton to Charlie Trie, with whom Vinnie the Chin would feel at home. And part of an official culture in which the Vice President of the United States could attend an obviously illegal fundraiser, raise loads of cash from clearly dubious sources, and then casually lie about it.

Still, Sen. Thompson will be hard pressed to put a dent in the Clinton Administration. When the economy has been buzzing along at 5.9 per cent growth, and it's 85 degrees and sunny, why bother with scandal arcana? Democrats will continue to divert attention from their scandal with countercharges about GOP wrongdoing (none of which, it is worth noting, involve abuse of government power). And the White House will continue to orchestrate a party-wide damage-control operation, at which it is almost as skilled as at raising foreign money.

The Week in Verse

July brought news to frighten and dismay
And all but spoil our *Independence Day*,
As *Stewart* and *Mitchum*, sadly, bit the dust—
Two heroes who ('twas said) we still could trust.
Who now the banner of our pride can wield?
Pete Sampras? *Tiger Woods*? Or *Holyfield*?
What paladin or doughty cavalier
Who isn't overpaid and over—ear?
While Clinton hobnobs with the *Greek* and *Dane*,
Cruises the *Med* with royalty of *Spain*,
Back in D.C. brave *Thompson* starts to hear
Of money monkey-business done last year.
Was there a plot hatched by some *Red Chinee*
To buy our *U.S.* foreign policy?
Too bad the probing Senate can't ask *Charlie Trie*!
But even if it could, would many care
To have the information he could share
And thus the clouds of secrecy dispel?
Yet thousands gathered this year in *Roswell*,
Mad keen t'unearth a rumored alien.
They didn't care a bit that Spaceman *Glenn*
Obfuscates hearings, heard as a ding-dong
About immunity and crafty *Huang*.

Meanwhile in space ('tis said the last frontier)
A crumpled fender takes out Russian *Mir*
While, some three hundred million miles away,
A dune buggy stands for the *U.S.A.*
We may not conquer space, avoid collisions,
But both will turn up on our televisions
To make us proud of deskbound *Kirks* and *Spocks*,
Our hero-nerds who're cool and—hey!—*Mars* rocks!
We know, who watch the news from TV land,
Whence comes another jolt to beat the bland,
As *Turner* thinks t'improve on *F. Scott Key*
Whose "warlike" strains we surely must agree
Sully our gentle Land o' th' *fin de siècle* Free.

—Juvenal

The Battle of Madrid

NATO'S leaders in Madrid invited Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join the alliance. Unanimous approval by the 16 present members of NATO is required. A debate in the U.S. Senate is expected early next spring.

Behind the historic decision were two other dramas. First, and less important, was the dispute over who would be invited to join. Some of the allies wanted Rumania and Slovenia added to the list; the U.S. insisted on only three for now. Washington's motives were tactical: Having the Baltic states very much on its mind, it wanted to be certain that there would be a second round of entrants. If the five likeliest nations had been admitted at Madrid, inhibitions concerning other candidates might have hardened into permanent exclusion.

The larger drama is the debate just beginning in the United States. On June 25, twenty senators from both parties wrote the President requesting answers to a number of basic questions about the costs and risks of bringing NATO into Eastern Europe. On June 26, fifty former U.S. officials, senators, diplomats, and experts announced they had already reached their conclusion: NATO enlargement was "a policy error of historic proportions" because it would wreck NATO, antagonize the Russians, and bankrupt the Central and Eastern Europeans—and perhaps us too.

It is proper that a debate that has until now preoccupied the experts should widen to include the broader public. It is also proper that skeptical senators ask hard questions of the President. The Gang of Fifty has less excuse. Now that Russia has been bought off by an armful of concessions, including the NATO–Russia "charter" signed by Yeltsin in Paris in May, the critics are being more Catholic than the Pope. Opposition to NATO enlargement stems from an unholy coalition between liberal and moderate internationalists (who should know better than to try to sabotage a policy now formally decided by the entire Alliance—at American urging, no less), and the more elemental forces of grass-roots isolationism. The skeptical senators on the Republican side are mostly newcomers to foreign policy. If the Senate votes no, it will not be because of the sophisticated if convoluted internationalist arguments of George Kennan and Marshall Shulman, but because of an isolationist undertow. The oppositionists in our foreign-policy elite are playing with fire.

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Patten's Progress

WHEN Chris Patten arrived in Hong Kong as its governor in the summer of 1992, he found a colony frightened about its future. The Tiananmen Square massacre three years earlier had punctured all the happy talk about how a modernizing China could be trusted to abide by the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration.

So what did Mr. Patten accomplish? Not, as he himself concedes, democracy. His reforms—increasing the number of directly elected seats in the legislature by two, and opening up the others to indirect election—left Hong Kong with a credible legislature, as the Thatcher government had promised when selling the Joint Declaration to Hong Kong and to Parliament.

Now even this is gone, replaced by a legislature elected by a committee of some three hundred of China's appointed friends. In sticking to his program, however, Mr. Patten showed that China was not serious about its promises; he helped midwife a genuine democratic opposition; and he ended Britain's unseemly collusion in China's efforts to ratchet down the promises made in the Joint Declaration. As a result, his reputation is strikingly similar to Ronald Reagan's: derided by the establishment, respected by his adversaries, and admired by the people he served.

Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's new chief executive, is a decent man but suffers a huge credibility gap (for months, polls have put his approval ratings much lower than Mr. Patten's). This gap can only grow. Already there are doubts about whether he really exercises authority over Chinese troops stationed in Hong Kong. Mr. Tung also insists that Hong Kong's traditional hands-off approach to business must yield to industrial policy. The question is often asked whether in twenty years Hong Kong will look more like China, or China more like Hong Kong. Probably both will look more like the rest of Asia. That would be a great leap forward for China, but the end of Hong Kong as a free and open city.

Gerhart Niemeyer, R I P

WHEN the Nazis took over in Germany, Gerhart Niemeyer, age 26, left his native country. He taught and studied abroad and in 1937 came with his wife, Lucie, to America. He taught at Princeton, worked for the State Department as a foreign-affairs specialist, lectured at the National War College, and, in 1955, settled at Notre Dame as a professor of political philosophy. He had been a non-Jewish self-exile from Germany and was now another Protestant presence at Notre Dame. "I stopped teaching only when the exact words I searched for didn't materialize in my mind," he explained. "When it's thoughts or nomenclature, you can angle in on them with a little help sometimes from the students." The time had come for the middleweight, middle-sized professor with the blond curly hair to quit, which he did at age 85, departing South Bend to live alongside his daughter and grandchildren in Greenwich. He had taught for more than fifty years and written ten books. He had lost his cherished wife in 1987. In 1980 he was ordained an Episcopal priest, later converting to Roman Catholicism. When Frank Meyer died in 1972, Gerhart Niemeyer took over the monthly philosophical column in NATIONAL REVIEW that Meyer had begun under the logo "Principles and Heresies."

On Sunday, June 22, Lisa Niemeyer Silver, Gerhart's only daughter (he had four sons), called. She said her father was on his deathbed but would like to hear my voice. "It's possible he will reply in German. But I know he will hear you." I spoke into the telephone and said what I said, and heard him reply faintly in acknowledgment. The next day I left for Turkey, where the news reached me in mid-week that Gerhart had died.

I THOUGHT back on the sunny afternoon in Washington, D.C. It was 1951. I was spending the summer there pretending to use the Library of Congress to do research on the tradition of academic freedom. Actually, I spent my days in safe houses being instructed in the arts of covert intelligence for the CIA. My friend and tutor Willmoore Kendall took me to meet his old friend Gerhart Niemeyer, and we spoke in the garden about academic freedom, and he instructed me in distinctions common in German and indeed European culture.

He was emphatic in his pedagogical style. Gerhart was humble and inquisitive intellectually but never a mincer. *That's* the way it is done in Germany, take it or leave it. He would enrage our disputatious friend Willmoore from time to time by simply declining to pursue a point when he believed Willmoore was arguing only for the sake of doing so. But he would take infinite pains to communicate his point when the apprehension of it rested on elusive subtleties. In his teaching he exercised his special mission, helping his students—and his readers—to cope with the greater mysteries of political philosophy. He did this

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by exhibiting his successful resistance to what T. S. Eliot called the "dissociation of sensibilities," the cleavage between the life of the mind and the life of the heart. He showed us—or tried to do so—how to draw strength from confusion, and pleasure from the working of the mind. Readers of his books and essays felt the special vibrations Gerhart Niemeyer could generate toward the understanding of the good life, the special vindication of learning as an instrument of virtue.

Though Teutonic in style, Gerhart was unstinting in his expressions of friendship. "We do not see each other often but I never feel that the interstices have meant a loss. Thus I was not too sad not to be able to talk to you that night [of his ordination]. It was not an occasion for conversing. I saw you, I felt your hand, and got the glance from your eye. No more was needed." While unambiguous in criticism, he was also abundant in approval. "Whenever I read something of yours like this [he wrote of an obituary in NATIONAL REVIEW on David Niven] I feel as if there were no distance, or time of absence, at all between us. There is an immediacy of presence which, again, is possible only through the realm of spiritual mediation." He wrote after reading a book I sent him, "The music is about friendship rather than friends as such. 'This love one can imagine between angels'—remember those words of C. S. Lewis's *The Four Loves*? Curiously enough, there are few books in literature that can be called 'a celebration' of friendship. [This] is one of them. Throughout it one has the stimulation of well-being, not because of the wine and the cooking, but because of congenial companionship. At some points it rises to great heights, as when Danny, in the solitude of his night watch, worries about the captain's besetting concerns and composes and says a prayer for him. But mostly it moves on in the undulations of sheer harmony, like the Pastoral Symphony, without high summits or deep canyons."

Gerhart Niemeyer spent many years communicating to the readers of this journal his special blend of political philosophy, which rejected all that was barren in modernism, groping for the central truths of human experience, and fondling the fruits of their discovery. The editors of NATIONAL REVIEW join me in extending condolences to his family. —WFB

"Although Germans are not thought to be the most humorous race in town, Gerhart's love of laughter has always been a distinctive characteristic of this native of Essen. While acutely sensing the tragedy of this most awful century, he could always laugh, even as Whittaker Chambers laughed right through the *Weltschmerz* he memorialized. I do not know Solzhenitsyn, but I like to think that the man who has the stomach to paint the definitive portrait of Gulag has been given the grace of laughter. And there are different kinds of laughter, Gerhart's being of the generous kind, the laughter of gratitude: to the person who makes him laugh, and to the protocols of the cosmos that permit laughter, a divine revel. Fulton Sheen would preach that grown men must know to laugh, even as they must know to cry. One weeps most profoundly for others; and one laughs most salvifically to express thanks."
—Excerpt from the introduction, by WFB, to *Aftersight and Foresight: Selected Essays*, by Gerhart Niemeyer, University Press of America, 1988

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Memo to: WFB
From: JMcF

Did you see the wonderful correspondence between Archbishop Heenan of Westminster and Evelyn Waugh, reprinted in *The Latin Mass* (Spring 1997)? Here's one paragraph, with maybe the funniest line Waugh ever wrote:

"Dear Archbishop: Please forgive me for troubling you. I read in many papers that the clergy welcome advice from the laity. I doubt if this is true, but your kindness at our last meeting emboldens me to write. You sent me away reassured that the novelties about to be introduced would be much mitigated. I do not know how things are in Westminster. In the provinces they are *tohu bohu* (if you will forgive a quotation from a language otherwise unknown to me) . . ."

Bill, what language, one wonders, was spoken in Waugh's provinces? And how would one know that *tohu bohu* means . . . Means what? A great device—an invented couple of words from a language not known, unidentified, and certainly not used within reach of London. But the effect is terrific.

Dear Jim: Hilarious. Oh my goodness how awful that he is gone. Thirty-one years without Evelyn Waugh, but we (you) continue to discover him. Warmest, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

On a recent flight, a stewardess offered me a selection from an all too bland stack of magazines. I triumphantly pulled out my *NR* and began to read. Upon deplaning, I realized I'd left it in the seat pocket in front of me. At first, I worried my collection would be short. Then it occurred to me that maybe my loss could be another's gain.

Since I fly about as often as you publish, I've decided to turn this mishap into practice, with the hope that my small gesture may enlighten the lives of others. Just think, if everyone . . .

Only my best,
Maury Kauffman
Nutley, N.J.

Dear Mr. Kauffman: A terrific idea! But don't leave one in the cockpit. The pilot would insist on finishing it before landing, and we don't want the public to be inconvenienced. Cordially, **—WFB**

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CAPITAL SCENE

Hardball

RICH LOWRY

Roman Genn

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ON Wednesday June 11, Michael Madigan and Alan Baron, the top Republican and Democratic lawyers respectively on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, consulted with Justice Department attorneys on granting immunity to 18 Asiagate witnesses. The Justice lawyers said giving immunity to 17 of the witnesses (15 of whom were involved in Al Gore's Buddhist-temple fundraiser) wouldn't interfere with the department's own investigation. That meant Committee Chairman Fred Thompson could get their testimony for his high-profile hearings set to begin a month later. Or so it seemed.

The next day the *New York Times* broke a story with new details about how Gore almost certainly knew that the Buddhist-temple event was a fundraiser. This made the prospective testimony of the Buddhist priests and devotees seem all the more perilous. At 10:30 that morning Minority Leader Tom Daschle announced—in what was news to Thompson—that none of the committee's Democrats would go along with granting the witnesses immunity. Then Alan Baron called Michael Madigan to let him know they needed to touch base with the Justice Department again—it had had a change of heart.

This time, Justice said it could approve giving immunity to only two of the witnesses. Democrats on the committee then blocked en masse granting immunity to any of the witnesses, including the two Justice had approved. The only exception was Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D., Conn.), who supported immunity for at least those two. Ranking committee Democrat John Glenn (Ohio) proceeded to demand that Thompson give him roughly thirty more subpoenas on conservative groups in exchange for his lifting the blockade on the witnesses; in other words, unless Thompson aided Glenn's pursuit of Republican-oriented groups, his inquiry into Administration wrongdoing was, in effect, off.

In the end, Glenn got what he wanted. Indeed, on the eve of Thompson's high-profile Asiagate hearing, this season of scandal in Washington has been all about defense—the ability of the Democrats to delay and distract until Republican investigations begin to collapse of their own weight. Democrats have employed a strategy of bait-and-switch, then bait again. Every concession wrung from Republicans in the interest of "bi-partisanship" or "fairness" is then re-invested in an effort to spike the investigation for partisan purposes. No territory is ever simply conceded, no delay is ever too small to bother making. The result is a defense so successful it makes Wellington at Waterloo look timid and unimaginative by comparison.

Consider the investigation into alleged wrongdoing in last year's Louisiana Senate election, a useful case study of Democratic tactics. After months of evidentiary skirmishes between Republican Woody Jenkins and Democrat Mary Landrieu, on April 17 John Warner's Senate Rules Committee voted to send investigators to New Orleans. End of story? Just the beginning. Ranking minority member Wendell Ford (D., Ky.) wouldn't sign off on the committee's actually hiring outside lawyers unless Democrats got to hire their own set of attorneys (Ford's approval was required by federal law before the committee could proceed). Two weeks of negotiations ensued over the protocol of the investigations, another week over the specifics of the legal contracts.

Ford's cooperation was important for a second reason. FBI agents couldn't be assigned to the probe unless there was a bi-partisan request for them. At first, Ford didn't want any agents. It took two weeks to get him to agree to request them (and then only two instead of the six to eight Warner wanted), another two weeks for a reluctant Clinton Justice Department to agree to the request, then finally another two weeks for the FBI actually to produce the agents. In all, the process took 53 days. FBI agents didn't arrive on the ground in New Orleans with other investigators until June 9—seven months after the election.

The investigative protocol called on investigators and committee staff to keep private the initial findings of the probe. But Ford's staff had objected when Warner wanted to spread the confidentiality net to individual senators and their staff. The Democratic investigative team was headed by Bob Bauer, a lawyer who, not coincidentally, does work for the Democratic Senate and House campaign committees. His shop

This season of scandal in Washington has been all about defense—the ability of Democrats to delay and distract until Republican investigations collapse of their own weight.

Mr. Lowry is NR's national political reporter.

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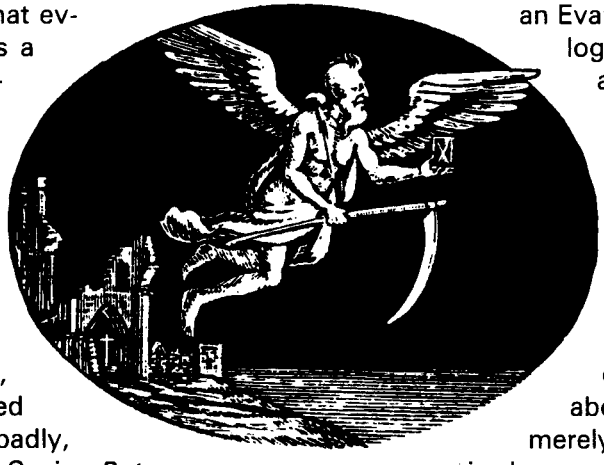
Are You Ready for Judgment Day?

Our decadent culture does its utmost to distract us from a stubborn reality: After we die, we must face a righteous God on Judgment Day. Amazingly, many clergymen are accomplices to this cover-up.

Go to a mod Catholic funeral: Father Fluff plays God and *automatically* places "good ole Charlie" in Heaven with the angels and saints — especially if Charlie was "martyred" by AIDS — and never mind that everyone knows Charlie was a scoundrel and never darkened the door of Father's church.



Or go to a "relevant" Mass: You sing a few ditties with Hallmark-card lyrics, dutifully clap for Sister Silly's liturgical dance, listen to Father Flake's pop-psychology rap, and, if Father hasn't butchered the words of the liturgy too badly, you realize that Christ is our Savior. *But what are we saved from?*

Even though both the Bible and the *Catechism* warn of eternal damnation, you never hear about Hell in church. Apparently, nobody goes down the Bottomless Pit anymore, so it dawns on you that we're saved from something else — probably low self-esteem. *Aha*! So that's why Jesus bothered to get Himself crucified! (Oh, sorry, delete "Himself." Some prickly feminist might be offended.)

You soon realize that while church is supposed to make you feel good about yourself, you get more satisfaction when you curl up in bed with the paper and a few hot chocolates on Sunday morning. So you make your nest your church.

Then you read that Bishop Bubbles himself says he just can't figure out why church attendance has dropped dramatically.

Actually, it's not hard to fathom: Many intelligent people find trendy churches superficial and utterly irrelevant to their eternal destiny. Some become lapsed Catholics, and others, if they can't find a solid Catholic parish, jump ship for, say, an Evangelical church. It's a sociological fact that churches which are *not* "nonjudgmental" about sin, which focus on Heaven *and Hell*, are the ones that are growing.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, refuse to ignore Judgment Day. It's a matter of charity, for being mum about the need for repentance merely puts more and more people in danger of ending up in Outer Darkness, wailing and gnashing their teeth. We articulate the Catholic Faith in undiluted and uncensored fashion. We know our neopagan culture is a culture of death, so we speak up for human life, from conception to the sick bed. We cover the full range of issues of concern to today's no-nonsense Catholic. We've been characterized by *Newsweek* as "cheeky" (it takes cheek to mention hellfire and brimstone, especially in an ad!) and by *Crisis* as "lively" (even, we hope, when we're grave).

If you're bored to death by elevator-music Catholicism, give us a try!

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kept other committee Democrats apprised of developments. And on the afternoon of June 25—even as Republicans were engaged in yet another round of negotiations with Democrats on how the probe would proceed—Sen. Bob Torricelli (D., N.J.) went public with the explosive allegation that a Jenkins investigator had tampered with witnesses.

Later that evening, Ford pulled out of the investigation entirely. His rationale? That the probe had already overrun its 45-day deadline. But there was no 45-day deadline: Warner had mentioned that time frame only as a guesstimate for how long the probe would take once investigators were on the ground. In any case, the investigators had been in New Orleans only two weeks, and the delay in getting them there was mostly Ford's doing. Ford also complained that the investigation was over budget. But much of its money had gone to billable hours spent negotiating with Democrats, an exercise that became so expensive that by the end the Republican field team had been whittled down from five lawyers to just two.

So, in effect, Ford was trying to scuttle the investigation for being ineffectual after investing great effort in ensuring its ineffectuality. It's exactly the tactic employed by John Glenn. The key concession Glenn won from Fred Thompson was a December 31 deadline for the end of his investigation. "[When] the Democrats won the concession of an end-date, the manner in which the investigation would be conducted was pre-ordained," says one Senate staffer. "The Democrats knew that all they had to do was play beat-the-clock." Democrats have haggled over everything, from immunity to DNC document requests. And all the little delays eventually, as one House aide puts it, "turn into something real."

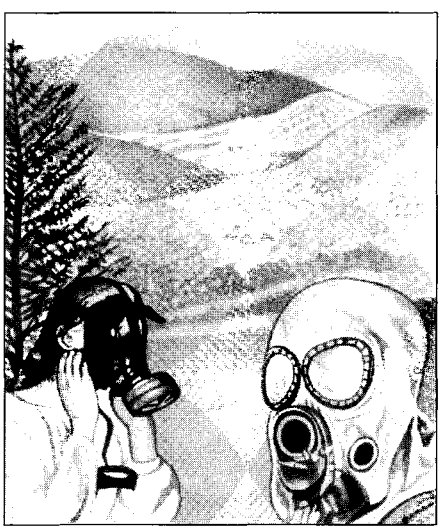
Glenn Ivey, a Daschle staffer, coordinates scandal defense between the White House operation (which has a scandal-management shop run by John Podesta) and congressional Democrats. "He had his fingerprints all over the successful obstruction of the Whitewater investigation," one Senate aide says of Ivey. "Now he's involved with this." Sometimes Administration foot-dragging has itself become a rationale for congressional obstruction. Thompson had trouble getting State Department help in securing interviews with witnesses overseas. On the eve of the investigators' trip overseas, Glenn wrote to Thompson objecting to it—because not enough interviews had been scheduled.

Against Dan Burton in the House, ranking minority member Henry Waxman (D., Calif.) has resorted to similar tactics, but has also led a PR campaign casting Burton as an irresponsible partisan. Waxman denounced deposition authority granted to Burton in June as unprecedented—actually it was modeled on the powers granted past Democratic chairmen. Then, when a Burton staff shake-up played in the press as controversial staffer Dave Bossie running rough-shod over committee professionals, Waxman pounced. He called for an end to the probe, denouncing it as "inept" and "a shambles," even after he had done his bit for months to reduce it to that condition. The investigation will continue, but with an indelible black eye in the media.

Indeed, the press has become a de facto Democratic ally in the latest round of scandals. The White House has used selective leaks to the press to sap Republican investigators' work of its shock value. In a strange reversal, gung-ho Burton investigator Dave Bossie has been accused of leaks that actually sprang from the White House. Meanwhile, the media are naturally fascinated by the irony of former RNC Chairman Haley Barbour being embroiled in a foreign-money scandal of his own. John Glenn recently complained, in that context, that the RNC hadn't been forthcoming enough: "[W]hat is occurring is making a mockery of the investigation, and, indeed, might be viewed in some quarters as obstruction of justice." He should know. □

Clean Air, Dirty Politics

PETER SAMUEL



Bonnie T. Gardner

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHEN a Dow chemical plant, or for that matter Joe's Furniture Finishing, reports its emissions to the Environmental Protection Agency, it is expected to report all its measurements, the good and the bad, the exculpatory and the incriminating. Company officials who have "cherrypicked" their data to omit inconvenient breaches of limits have gone to jail. Yet in recent months the EPA itself has been engaging in a systematic cherrypicking of data in order to win a policy battle over clean-air regulations. For example, when EPA Administrator Carol Browner testified to a Senate committee February 12, she displayed a poster entitled "Soot/Particulate Matter—The Science Calls for Action." The "science" presented by the EPA summarized the findings of five studies on PM2.5 (particulate matter 2.5 microns and less) which she said called for "action." (Incidentally even the title is unscientific since PM2.5 is far too small to include soot, and PM10 is already regulated.)

One of the studies cited by Miss Browner is a notorious misanalysis (done not by health specialists but by an economist). It purported to show a causal relation between the closure of a steel mill due to a strike and reduced hospital admissions of children in the county where the mill was located. The reduction in admissions was later explained by local epidemiologists as involving quite simply a coincidental drop in the severity of regular infectious bronchitis in the area.

Other studies cited on Miss Browner's poster were headed by a former EPA/National Resources Defense Council researcher whom Michael Fumento of the American Enterprise Institute describes, in his new book, *Polluted Science*, as a

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professional "particulate hunter." Mr. Fumento points out that this man and his colleagues have written (to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars) virtually all the studies supporting the EPA's position, the ones Administrator Browner listed on her poster. She left off her poster a greater number of studies that show no association between PM2.5 and ill health.

At a House committee hearing the chairman of the EPA's own Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, Dr. George T. Wolff, was asked about the EPA's claims that the studies are "consistent" in showing an association. He replied: "This consistency argument has been one of the arguments that EPA has used, saying that they [the association studies] are all consistent, so they have to be right. They're only consistent if you look at the studies EPA has looked at. If you don't include the ones that are inconsistent, then you come to the wrong conclusion."

The new clean-air standards are in many places close to, or even below, background natural levels.

Dr. Wolff also told the House Science Committee: "There are many examples where EPA gives more weight to the studies that support their agenda, and they are very skillful, but not always convincing, in providing reasons to dismiss those studies that provide alternative explanations."

One of the EPA's favorite studies has been the subject of extraordinary controversy because, contrary to scientific convention, the authors have refused to release their data sets for review and retesting. The principal author, Joel Schwartz, said he did not want his time wasted answering criticism from what he called "industry thugs."

Miss Browner's repeated assertion that "the science" shows the finer particles, PM2.5, are more dangerous than the already regulated larger particles, PM10, is the reverse of what most studies show. This may be why a study on Phoenix presented by an EPA scientist at a conference in April that found no association of illness with PM2.5, but some association with PM10, is not officially available. (It has been distributed through what some EPA scientists call "samizdat.") Mr. Fumento in his book says the only consistency in PM2.5 studies is that the EPA's three favorite researchers consistently find associations with illness, while other scientists find nothing or inconsistent associations. He says of Miss Browner's poster that it omitted eight relevant studies that presented clearly contrary conclusions and that it misrepresented aspects of four of the five studies it described.

"The EPA campaign [for its new clean-air standards] was so shockingly wrong, so downright dishonest, that it ought to raise the eyebrows of even jaded Washingtonians," said Fumento at AEI this week. Nonetheless, President Clinton last month permitted the standards to go into effect.

What made the EPA's complete victory the more amazing was that it was won over the opposition not just of industry groups and Republicans but of substantial parts of the Clinton Administration itself (the Commerce Department, the Transportation Department, the Office of Science and Technology, the Office of Management and Budget, the Treasury Department), and even EPA scientists. Governors and mayors were also lined up solidly against, as were traditionally Democratic constituencies such as labor. An array of moderate pro-environment politicians such as Rep. John Dingell (Democrat) and Sen. John Chafee (liberal Republican) also opposed the EPA.

In announcing the decision President Clinton said he realized it would be "controversial" but that his priority was to prevent asthma in children, a shameless piece of demagoguery since all the evidence is that asthma is caused by allergens and indoor air, not the outdoor particulates and ozone that are the subject of the new regulations. Clinton seems to have been emboldened recently in his moral posturing by his success in the budget fight and other recent encounters with the Congress.

Not only will the new clean-air standards be horrendously expensive, they may be quite unachievable because, according to estimates from the National Research Council and others, they are in many places close to, or even below, background natural levels. Even the President's science advisor, Jack Gibbons, admits this. Last November he wrote: "None of the proposed standards can be effective in reaching the goal of increasing health protection if they are unachievable, which is a possibility for some areas that are chronically unable to meet the current standard."

But for the ayatollahs of environmentalism at the EPA and in their allied green groups, achievability is of little concern. What is important is not the attainment of the end so much as the means: the regulation of detested "fossil fuel" machinery such as automobiles, power plants, and heavy industry.

BONNER Cohen, the editor of *EPA Watch*, a specialist newsletter, commented to NATIONAL REVIEW this week on the amazing political muscle shown by the environmental extremists in their victory on air regulations. Cohen says it was an "iron triangle" of leftist law-school graduates in the EPA, the environmental groups, and reporting slots in major newspapers that enabled President Clinton to take the position he did. And the EPA does not stop at the water's edge. Cohen says the green fundamentalists now have their sights set on Kyoto, where at year's end a follow-up to the 1992 Rio conference will be held. The Administration plans, at Kyoto, to commit the U.S. to drastic limits on carbon-dioxide emissions as part of a treaty to combat supposed "global warming." Such commitments on CO_2 are another attack on the hated "fossil fuel" technology.

Mr. Cohen tells us, however, that a backlash is developing. A broad coalition is forming in the U.S. Congress to roll back the regulations—and its probable leader is, of all people, liberal Michigan Democrat John Dingell. But the coalition faces an uphill fight. It will need a two-thirds majority in both houses, and there is no reason to suppose the White House will give up its tactic of posing the issue as one of industry cost versus kids' health.

Meanwhile, the House Science Committee alluded to another potential source of reaction. It referred to "the possibility that imposing a standard based on ambiguous science could cause state and local governments who must develop new implementation plans . . . to conclude that it is too costly to conform to the new standards and simply refuse to comply." Even if the forces of reason do not prevail in Washington, D.C., they may in the afflicted communities. □

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ON THE SCENE

Liberal Without a Cause

JUSTIN G. MAIONA

Roman Genn

BOSTON

NOVEMBER of 1990 was a heady time for Massachusetts Republicans: William Weld was elected the first Republican governor since 1970. Republicans were also elected as lieutenant governor and treasurer. In the State Senate, 16 Republicans were elected, more than enough to sustain Mr. Weld's veto. Mike Dukakis was out and it seemed like the beginning of a new era.

Fast forward to the summer of 1997, and the State Republican Party is in complete disarray. The Republican membership in the Senate has dwindled to seven and has long since lost its ability to sustain a Weld veto. After reaching 35 in 1990, the House Republicans have shrunk to a laughable 28 members of the 160-member body. Bill Weld is hoping to siesta in Mexico City and the State Treasurer, Joe Malone, and Lieutenant Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci (a Weld protegé), are on a collision course for the 1998 gubernatorial primary. And looming on the horizon is U.S. Representative Joe Kennedy, who plans to run for governor in 1998. How could this have happened when the Republican governor is enormously popular, having been re-elected in 1994 with 70 per cent of the vote? The answer is William Weld himself.

One must realize that there are two Gov. Welds. The first is the image the governor wants us to see, that of a witty, affable intellect, a party maverick, who has set out on an uncharted course and who refuses to be limited by principles—which he calls ideology.

The second Gov. Weld is a shrewd, calculating politician who eschews principle at the slightest hint of resistance. He is a fan of the big policy prop that will pacify critics with the least amount of effort; he uses the Republican Party to advance his career, often by poking it in the eyes.

Both of these Welds allow the Governor to play the role assumed by many Northeast Republicans—namely, the Republican critic.

This assessment is shared by party liberals, moderates, and conservatives. Vincent McLaughlin has been a member of the State Republican Committee since 1978. A self-proclaimed liberal Republican, he nevertheless is quite clear regarding Weld. "He is neither Republican nor Democrat nor Libertarian. He is Weldian."

In the 1990 election, Bill Weld presented himself as a crusading U.S. Attorney who resigned from Ed Meese's Justice Department in protest over what he perceived as Meese's ethical indiscretions. He ruthlessly and successfully portrayed his Republican Primary opponent, conservative State Representative Steven Pierce, as a brooding man eager to orchestrate a return of the "back-alley abortion." In the general election, Bill Weld consistently characterized the powerful Democratic Senate president, William Bulger (more a conservative than he), as the wrench in the gears of the Massachusetts state government.

Once safely in the corner office of the State House, Gov. Weld decided he liked politics as usual. Bill Weld developed an effective pattern of public grandstanding on issues like the death penalty. His annual presentation of the death-penalty bill—while lambasting the liberal Democratic leadership that opposed him in the legislature—was lapped up by the press. But that was it. Bill Weld had no further use for the issue.

John Ellis is a consultant in Boston with Rasky & Co. and a contributor to the *Boston Globe* editorial page. Ellis states that "the Weld Administration's degree of responsiveness to the *Globe* was amazing." He abandoned the Republicans in the legislature and refused to dirty his hands with the usual arm twisting and application of public pressure. Meanwhile, Weld was sitting in Bill Bulger's office, cutting deals with a man he spent six months vilifying.

For example, Weld had campaigned against a legislature full of career politicians whose lust for taxpayer dollars could not be satisfied. He vowed never to sign the legislative pay raise. Most Republicans in the state dutifully followed suit and publicly opposed the pay raise. Then, suddenly, Weld went silent on the issue and for weeks refused to comment on it.

> *'The Weld Administration's degree of responsiveness to the* Boston Globe *was amazing.'*

Early one morning, Weld signed a legislative pay-raise bill, in return for a small reduction on the capital-gains tax. That same day, to avoid the gathering storm of questions, he boarded a plane to Ireland with none other than Bill Bulger and Speaker Charlie Flaherty (who recently resigned the Speakership, after pleading guilty to tax fraud).

This politicking contributed to Gov. Weld's impressive 1994 re-election margin of 70 per cent of the popular vote. Why then are members of his own party

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backing Sen. Jesse Helms decision to torpedo Weld's nomination? Because after six-plus years of his posturing and party lashing, Massachusetts Republicans have concluded that Bill Weld does little for them.

According to McLaughlin, Weld declined even to respond to pleas from the state party to do "institutional advertising" for candidates during the 1994 election. This same form of advertising helped Gov. Voinavich of Ohio to capture his State Senate for the Republican Party. Weld's customary response to local candidates' pleas was to send the lieutenant governor to a fund raiser. Ellis confirms that Weld "was notoriously indifferent to local party concerns." In fact, as Ellis explains, "If you are Bill Weld, there are many things to do after dinner. Meeting with local activists in Haverill to discuss building the local party is not on his radar screen."

The governor's 1996 challenge against John Kerry fit the pattern. Weld spent most of 1995 and 1996 positioning himself to the left of John Kerry. His pro-abortion grandstanding outside the GOP convention hall in San Diego attracted attention from the liberal media, who predictably crowned him a potential contender for national office.

Back in Massachusetts Bill Weld campaigned for himself. According to McLaughlin, Weld had his eyes on John Kerry's Senate seat since 1990, and was, in fact, positioning himself for that seat throughout his terms as governor. Weld and his aides developed an "urban Democratic strategy" that would allow the governor to prevail in a Senate race. This strategy produced scores of Democratic appointments to vacant offices and increased spending on Democratic priorities. In return for this short-sighted largess, the governor was soundly beaten in the same urban areas in the 1996 Senate race. In the city of Lowell, where Weld showered patronage on local Democrats, his percentage in 1996 was down 4 per cent from his results in 1990.

As he continued to distance himself from the party, his opposition to Kerry became moot. He praised Hillary Clinton and complained that Kerry was too tough with entitlements. Ellis states that during the last three weeks of the campaign, Weld could no longer justify his campaign as the differences between him and Kerry had been erased. His campaign motto might have been "Don't hate me because I am a Republican!"

Weld's left-leaning campaign obviously did not help other Republicans in the state. In 1996, Republicans lost more seats in the Senate and House. Republican congressmen Peter Blute and Peter Torkildsen were defeated, the latter by less than one thousand votes. The Clinton sweep presumably contributed to the rout, but it might have been stemmed had Weld devoted even a small portion of his time to the Republican party.

Now Bill Weld is bored and wants to go to Mexico. Naturally, the Democratic machine led by the Kennedys saw this as an opportunity to remove him as an obstacle to Joe Kennedy in 1998. Despite this obvious maneuvering by the Democrats, Bill Weld still wants out. This ship has taken him as far as it will go, so he is scuttling it and escaping in the only lifeboat. A caller on the popular *Howie Carr* radio show recently lamented "I can't think of one thing Weld had fought for in the last three years." There is one thing: Bill Weld. □

Turkey Shoot

DEROY MURDOCK

Roman Genn

ISTANBUL

CALL it a velvet coup. To the West's relief, Turkey's military has ousted this country's first Islamist leader. In just 51 weeks, Necmettin Erbakan flew round-trip from opposition politician to prime minister and back again. Turkey's armed forces and its equally secular political establishment orchestrated his political demise without gunfire. Erbakan's stunning rise and fall shows that, despite Western worries, the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to Turkey's secular state has been greatly exaggerated.

The West, of course, is vitally interested in this key ally astride Europe and the Middle East. Within NATO, Turkey's army is second in size only to America's. It's also a rarity: a Muslim democracy. Turkey's large, emerging market grew 7.4 per cent last year and attracted $16.8 billion in foreign investment in 1995, including $885 million from U.S. businesses plus $3.7 billion in American exports.

Seven months after winning a December 1995 multi-party election with just 21 per cent of the vote, Erbakan's Welfare Party agreed to lead a coalition with a secular conservative party led by Turkey's first woman Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller, whose surprising embrace of the fundamentalists is explained by many Turks as a way of evading an inquiry into charges that she and her husband were massively corrupt. But Erbakan quickly frightened the U.S. and its allies by renewing ties with Iran's fundamentalist regime. Official visits with Iran furrowed Western brows, as did a trade deal and a new $21 billion natural-gas pipeline linking the two states. He further ruffled American feathers last October when he visited Libya and described Muammar Khadafi and his people as victims, not architects, of terrorism. His proposal to padlock casinos was no royal flush back home either.

When the Welfare mayor of Sincan staged an anti-Israel rally last February, the military rolled tanks menacingly through the Ankara suburb's streets. Fearing a coup such as those of 1960, 1971, and 1980, Erbakan quickly agreed to 18 "measures" offered by the military to reign in fundamentalist Islamic schools and organizations.

After surviving a May 20 no-confi-

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dence vote, Erbakan's government was hit with another broadside. Turkey's chief prosecutor, Vural Savas, filed an 18-page list of charges against Welfare. The party "is against secularism and . . . is increasingly creating an atmosphere of civil war," Savas announced. Erbakan promptly offered to take his case to the people through early elections. But he ultimately yielded to the military's backstage efforts to erode his support within parliament, industry, and labor, and resigned June 18.

A growing community of free-market intellectuals strives to keep Turkey open and forward-thinking.

While some fretted over Erbakan's high-pressure, less-than-democratic departure, he hardly seems missed. The Istanbul Stock Exchange's National-100 index, for instance, soared 16.7 per cent in the first two weeks after his exit. It rose 2.3 per cent higher the day center-rightist Mesut Yilmaz became prime minister. The Motherland Party chief promises to defend secularism and control religious schools. Reinforcing the separation of mosque and state, Yilmaz's government has suspended plans to renovate a Muslim holy place. As he recently told reporters: "Our government will restore the republic, which is built on democratic and libertarian foundations."

Beyond Turkey's tumultuous political factions, a growing community of free-market intellectuals also strives to keep Turkey open and forward-thinking. Since 1994, the Ankara-based Association for Liberal Thinking (ALT) has advanced privatization, deregulation, school choice, and other voluntaristic solutions to public-policy problems. (Outside America, "liberal" means the opposite of its U.S. definition.) ALT publishes newsletters, a quarterly journal, market-oriented books by Turkish authors, and translated Western works. It also broadcasts two public-affairs programs: *Face to Face* and *Politics and Dialogue*. Last summer, five hundred people attended an ALT conference in Ankara. Last fall, just steps from the rocket-like minarets of the Blue Mosque, an overflow crowd gathered at Istanbul's Armada Hotel for a seminar organized by ALT, the U.S. Atlas Economic Research Foundation, and Germany's Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

"Two years ago, there were no intellectual groups like ours," says ALT president Atilla Yayla. "Now we're well-known and are receiving favorable responses even from small cities in Turkey. People are writing to get to know us. Some are sending contributions. Young academics send articles to our journal."

Free-market ideas "are springing and taking root," says an even more upbeat Besim Tibuk, leader of Turkey's Liberal Democratic Party. "Liberals should make our views even louder. The beast of socialism has been dismembered." Free-marketeers do face resistance, says Eser Karakas, an Istanbul University economist. "Despite all that is going on in Turkey, there is a resistant political class that is Keynesian in nature. They do not want to give up their benefits." ALT's Osman Okyar sees Turkey trying to wriggle out from under a "command economy so pervasive and intricate as to invade every level of the economy." He praised Turgut Ozal, the free-market prime minister who the Turkish Left used to denounce with their chant: "Reaganism/Thatcherism/Ozalism."

Ozal "was courageous enough to dismantle some of the pillars of the command economy," Okyar says. Before Ozal people with dollars were punished. Ozal liberated interest and exchange rates. Despite Ozal's efforts before he died in 1993, Okyar believes Turkey "is not yet in the happy land of the free economy. We are still in a sort of semi-command economy. The leaders still have a lot of freedom to intervene."

Beyond these free-marketeers, the strongest stewards of Turkey's secularism are its 62 million Turks. Turkey has looked Westward since 1923 when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk set this ancient country on a modern, secular path. His incorporation of Roman letters into the Turkish language remains among his most ambitious reforms. He also closed religious schools and prohibited Turks from wearing fezes which symbolized the officially Islamic Ottoman Empire. Ironically, this forced secularization departed from Turkey's tradition of religious tolerance which even the Ottomans embraced. (There were limits, unfortunately, to Ottoman open-mindedness, as seen in Turkey's massacres of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in the First World War.) While their numbers are small, Istanbul's Christians today attend several local churches. Near Taksim Square, the Dutch Chapel's cross-capped steeple climbs into the sky.

Istanbul's Jewish community, centered in the Balat district, dates back to the arrival of refugees from the fifteenth-century Spanish Inquisition. Roughly twenty thousand Jews call Turkey home.

Late one night, across from a 1,584-year-old wall that once protected the city, I stroll beside Ramazan Aktas, a professor at Turkey's military academy. He wishes America would understand Turkey's situation. Referring to the Turkish/Iranian pipeline, he asks: "Where else can we get gas? From Iraq?" While Turkish deals with Iran and its neighbors have caused ulcers at Foggy Bottom, Aktas wishes the West would trust its ally. "We'll still be here," he says. "We'll have to deal with Saddam after the U.S. is gone from the region."

We soon discover a clue as to why Erbakan's Islamist experiment failed. A festive neighborhood called Kumkapi teems with revelers even on a Monday at midnight. A narrow cobblestone street is flanked by numerous outdoor restaurants, all jammed tightly together. Here and there, people dance on long, rectangular tables as their drinking buddies and loved ones clap rhythmically to the sounds of roving musicians.

One restaurant, Neyzen, sits beneath a large tree from whose trunk a sack of two dozen purple onions dangles around a nail. Intricately embroidered cloth chairs have been arranged alfresco under bright, yellow awnings.

A BAND of troubadors plays frantically paced, infectiously energetic Turkish, Gypsy, and even Greek folk songs. The music accelerates, ever faster, punctuated only by rhythmic clapping. It sounds like Turkish hillbilly music or Balkan bluegrass. Perhaps reflecting Turkey's position as a cultural crossroads, some of the rhythms also recall those of India and China.

The scruffy singer belts out what seem like very naughty songs. Suddenly, he wedges an open, plastic water bottle between his belly and his buckle and gyrates without spilling a drop. He pauses and, with his hips, bends the bottle forward and fills the water glasses of several screaming patrons. They applaud gleefully and toss a million Turkish lira (about $12.00) onto their table. The burly singer grins, bellows, rolls his eyes

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and slaps the bank notes onto his sweaty brow where they stick instantly, to the crowd's delight.

Ramazan Aktas, the military professor, looks around and says with a smile, "We are relaxed people." □

Luck of the Irish?

GEOFFREY SMITH

LONDON

"WHERE there is intransigence on both sides that becomes impossible." Mo Mowlam, the British Northern Ireland Secretary, was speaking ruefully of her failure to strike a compromise between the Catholic and Protestant communities that would have avoided the disorders that engulfed the province after the Drumcree march on Sunday. In a sense this encapsulates the tragedy of Northern Ireland. It is because this is not a place with a gift for compromise that activities which are acceptable elsewhere provoke mayhem and bloodshed there.

Elsewhere the right to march is considered a basic civil right. It is one of the benchmarks by which Chinese rule in Hong Kong will be judged. The St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York and other American cities is a joyful occasion. The march of the Protestant Orange Order in Drumcree presented no threat to anyone and was itself peaceable. But it offended Catholic sensibilities, provided an opportunity for terrorists to orchestrate violence, and has created a new wave of bitterness around the province.

The question is whether Blair is giving Sinn Fein one last chance too many.

This has come just when the new British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had gone farther than any of his predecessors to reassure Nationalist opinion and to involve Sinn Fein in the negotiating process. Indeed, the question to ask of Blair is not whether he has done enough to try to bring Sinn Fein into the process, but whether he is giving the party one last chance too many.

Mr. Smith is the author of Reagan and Thatcher *(W.W. Norton).*

He launched a dramatic new initiative two weeks ago giving Sinn Fein the opportunity to take part in all-party negotiations six weeks after it declares another ceasefire, and he is not giving up hope even after this week's violence. He wants the talks to begin in September and to be concluded by next May. Sinn Fein would not have to give up its arms before talks began: the sticking point with Major. Instead, Blair has accepted the proposal in the Mitchell Report last year (from the international body chaired by former Sen. George Mitchell) that the decommissioning of weapons by both Catholic and Protestant paramilitary groups could be carried out step by step as the talks proceed. These proposals are all designed to meet Sinn Fein concerns.

The initiative is all the more remarkable as it came only the week after a particularly horrific murder in cold blood by the IRA of two Northern Ireland policemen with young children in the town of Lurgan. This atrocity, which shocked opinion in both communities in both parts of Ireland, was bewildering as well as brutal. The British and Irish governments were already doing everything they could to prepare the ground for all-party negotiations, which was precisely what Sinn Fein was demanding.

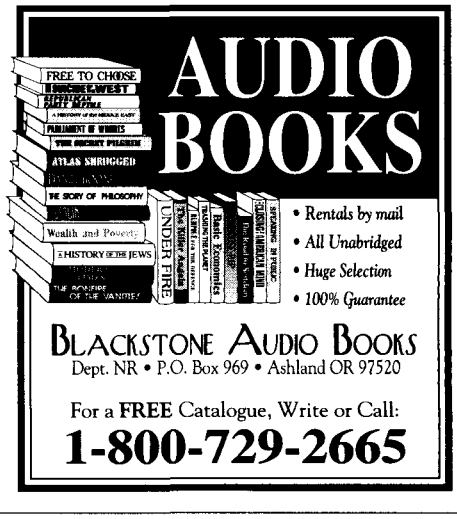
Blair had allowed British officials to re-open the direct contacts with Sinn Fein that had been abandoned after the end of the previous IRA ceasefire in February 1996. He had made a speech apologizing for the British government's role in the Irish potato famine a century and a half ago—a symbolic gesture to Nationalist opinion of some significance. Yet while Sinn Fein continued to demand a place at the negotiating table, the IRA responded to these conciliatory moves by keeping up their program of bombing even before Lurgan.

So they have been talking peace, but acting war. There can be three possible interpretations of this. The first is that they have no intention of negotiating seriously but believe that talking about talks will appeal to Americans, confuse the British, unsettle the Unionists, and remove the risk of a security crackdown. In that case the sooner their bluff is exposed the better.

The second possible explanation is that some of them would like a political settlement but others retain their faith in the gun. Some observers on the spot believe that there are signs of a serious struggle raging within the IRA. Even if the leaders are in agreement, they may perhaps be having difficulty controlling their wilder elements. If this second explanation is true, it would make negotiations with Sinn Fein futile and possibly dangerous unless the leadership can impose control. Some sections of the IRA would have a motive for committing even more terrorist acts. If success in the talks ever seemed likely, they would redouble their efforts. Negotiating progress would trigger violence, not remove its cause.

The third possible explanation is that Sinn Fein is seeking a political settlement but believes that continued bombing will strengthen its negotiating hand. It may calculate that, whatever the British may say, more and more violence would weaken their resolve and incline them to accept a weak compromise—no doubt with lavish supplies of diplomatic camouflage. If that is what Sinn Fein believes, it would reveal the party as not only unscrupulous but stupid.

There can be no political settlement in Ulster without the agreement of both the Catholic and Protestant communities. Some people, especially in the United States, speak of Northern Ireland as if it were a colonial problem, simply a struggle between the British and the Catholic community in the province—with the IRA as the latest in a long line



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of colonial freedom fighters. Get the British out, unite the whole of Ireland, and then the people there will live in peace.

That is dangerous nonsense. The only thing such a strategy would bring nearer is civil war. The critical argument in Northern Ireland today is not between Britain and one of the communities there, nor between Britain and the Republic. The struggle is essentially a tribal contest, with religion the badge of the respective tribes, not a cause of the conflict in itself. It is so intense because it is about the very future of the province. Which country is Northern Ireland to be a part of: the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland?

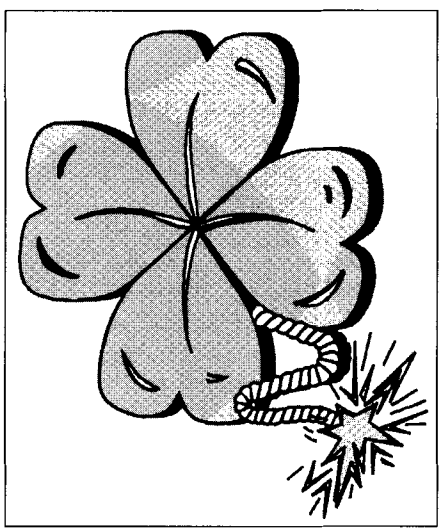
The Protestants, many of them of Scottish descent, number roughly 60 per cent of the province's population. While a referendum and a succession of opinion polls indicate that a minority of Catholics in the province are happy to remain in the United Kingdom, the Protestants are solidly in favor of doing so. They are a tough and stubborn people. The very last way to secure their agreement would be to try to bomb them into acquiescence. That would make Unionist politicians all the more resistant to negotiating with the IRA and be likely to bring the Protestant gunmen on to the streets.

So the prospects of a negotiated settlement with Sinn Fein have never been good. After Drumcree they look remote. It looks unlikely at the moment that the party will even qualify for the talks by persuading the IRA to call another ceasefire. Is it worth still trying to negotiate with it then? The case for the Blair plan's offer to Sinn Fein is that even if the chances of success seem slim it is right to give the party this one last specific opportunity, and even more that it is essential to be seen to be doing so. There are some dead ends that it is necessary to go down simply to make sure that they do not lead anywhere. If Sinn Fein does not take this chance, The blame will be entirely theirs.

So the Blair offer is an each-way bet. Either it will lead to substantive negotiations with Sinn Fein, which is the essential purpose, or it should establish a solid coalition of opinion outside Sinn Fein, among Catholics as well as Protestants, that accepts the futility of dealing with it. John Hume, the leader of the Catholic SDLP in the north, who previously leaned over backward to develop his partnership with Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, accepted publicly and unequivocally when Blair announced his plan that if Sinn Fein will not play on those terms the game must go ahead with it. There is no valid reason why Drumcree should change his position.

But it is worth this last attempt to engage Sinn Fein if—but only if—three conditions are met. First, there must be no more last chances. If Sinn Fein do not take this opportunity, it would be positively dangerous to go on trying to entice it into further diplomatic exchanges. That would alarm the Unionists and lose respect all around.

Second, if Sinn Fein rejects the path of peaceful discussion, then tough new security measures ought to be taken against the IRA. There will be those who will say that such measures would jeopardize any talks that would then be proceeding with the other parties. But



Luba Kolomytseva

that would be a complete misreading of the position. Sinn Fein would by that stage have deliberately rejected the opportunity of negotiation, the IRA would have refused to call another ceasefire, the peace process—difficult enough at any time—would at best be feeling its way forward against a background of intimidation in the Catholic community and a mixture of fear and outrage among Protestants. Security would in such circumstances become the ally of negotiation.

Next, there should be no arm-twisting of Unionist politicians in the talks. Of course, no negotiations in the world ever took place without some pressure on at least one of the parties. That is natural. But it is often suggested, not least in the United States, that it is up to the British government to make sure that the Unionists accept what seems reasonable to everyone else around the table. That would be wrong in principle and unrealistic in practice.

Tony Blair has reaffirmed now the commitment of successive British governments that no change will be made in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland without the approval of the people there. That is accepted by the Government of the Republic, by President Clinton, and by John Hume and his SDLP colleagues, but it has yet to be endorsed by Sinn Fein. It is a commitment that needs to be applied in the spirit as well as the letter.

There would be no justification for the British government pushing the Ulster Unionists into a course of action that was designed to lead irreversibly over a period of time to Northern Ireland being absorbed into the Republic. No government anywhere has the right to force a section of its people out of the state of which it is a part into another country as if they were an inconvenient commodity. Fortunately, Tony Blair has declared not only that any agreement in these negotiations will be put to a referendum in Northern Ireland but also that he believes the province is going to stay in the United Kingdom.

If he were to try to put undue pressure on the Unionist leaders he would probably fail, but it might be worse if he succeeded. They are not free agents who can act irrespective of Protestant opinion. David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist Party leader, at first gave a cautious welcome to the Blair initiative, but was then forced to become more critical. The atmosphere is very tense in Northern Ireland at the moment, it could be positively explosive when the marching season reaches its peak this weekend and nothing would be more likely to provoke Protestant paramilitary groups into counter-terror than the belief that their politicians were being pushed around by the British government and international forces.

The gap between the constitutional objectives of Nationalists and Unionists is too great to be removed in one set of negotiations. There is no natural meeting point on the big issue. The best contribution that the friends of Ireland can make is not to raise hopes too much. There are people who would be alive in Northern Ireland today if at certain critical times in the past the expectations of the Catholics and the fears of the Protestants had not become unrealistically high. □

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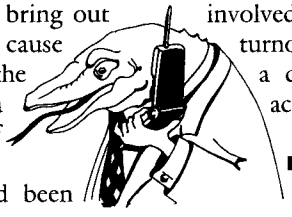
GEKKO

I FOUND one. The only one left. A gold bull, I mean. After the gold market's Black Monday, on July 7th, all you could hear on the gold street was the mournful sound of the margin clerks pushing their carts and calling for the investors to bring out their dead. The immediate cause was the announcement by the Reserve Bank of Australia that it had sold off most of its gold reserves in recent months, but the slide had been building for months. Any precious-metals freak with his animal spirits intact had already moved over into playing the platinum group metals, either as a straight long or in the form of a spread over gold. That meant that even many of the precious-metals optimists had taken a short position in gold, so the Reserve Bank's action was just a final boot in the face to a metal already prone in the gutter.



I still believe in Santa Claus, though, and I remembered a chart Grant Noble had sent me a couple of months ago. Grant is a commodities investor in Lake Forest, Ill., who while basing much of his work on fundamental analysis, uses price charts for his technical work that are deflated by the dollar index. He's had some good calls over the years, particularly in the grains. He had been consistently bearish on gold ever since 1993, but I thought he was a little out of it when he called for a gold bottom somewhere between $315 and $320. Guess what? That's where the bottom was plumbed on July 7th.

So I called up Grant to see where he thought the "precious" metal was going next. "I have finally turned strongly bullish on gold," he said, "and I'm talking as many of my friends into it as I can. I like the August or even the December futures contracts."

From here, Grant expects gold to struggle somewhat to get past $340. The key is the old $400-$420 resistance area, which battlefield is littered with the whitening bones of gold bulls. "Once it gets past $420, there will be no stopping gold, because then the hedge funds will decide it's a momentum play." The interesting thing about this market is its size—a tiny fraction of the equities or fixed income markets. Once momentum buyers get involved, in a market where the turnover is maybe a billion dollars a day, it will be not easy to accommodate them.

■ Speaking of precious metals, we're going to find out pretty soon how much of the platinum group metals the Russians will ship this year. Up to now, speculation about their 1997 shipments has been a futile exercise, since there haven't been any real shipments. Not even the bulls believe that this total drought will continue, and yet the bears, led by the Japanese trading houses, electronics companies, and automakers, have been reduced to leaking absurd stories about the supposed pressure on palladium holders such as Tiger Management to sell off their positions.

The real bull story will come out when the Russians do resume their regular shipments. Yes, some of the short positions can then be covered by the physical deliveries, but the total demand will almost certainly be goosed by the consumers' building of inventories. For as long as anyone can remember, which I think is around five years or so, it hasn't made sense to hold inventories of either platinum or palladium, since God had decreed that the price would always go down (see above story). When it turns out that the limitless supply from the Russian reserves had a limit after all, those Excel jocks in the Japanese comptrollers' departments will decide that maybe having a little extra on hand might not be a bad idea after all.

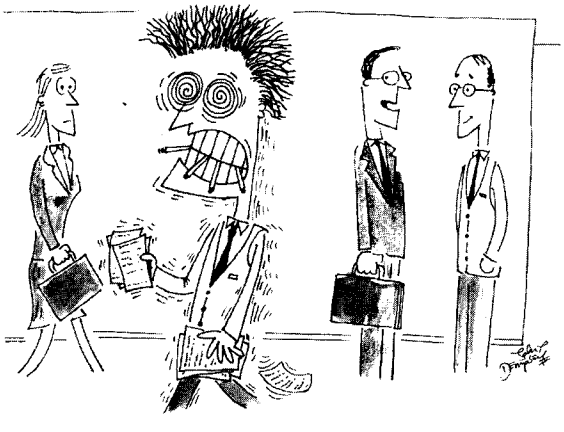
Interestingly, Engelhard, which as I recall knows something about the PGM's, is known to be going long the PGM contracts as far out as there is liquidity. Let's say they decide to take delivery. What will the locals do if the metals exchanges' warehouse stocks aren't all they should be?

■ Enough about metals. I mean what good is any of this if you don't have your health? And what good is your health if you don't have a managed care provider who can pay to keep it in tune? I have been skeptical for a long time about some of the faster growing managed care providers such as Oxford Health (OXHP). I wondered if they were going to be able to keep their promises about providing premium care at a competitive price. If you talk to some "care providers" who used to have titles like doctor, you find that some of the more aggressively expanding HMO companies have hit on a foolproof means to reduce expenditures below their competitors—they're slow to pay bills.

The stock market, of course, has already intuited that a brilliant scheme like this is in operation, and has rewarded a number of these companies with the appropriately aggressive multiples.

The long-term problem is that cash flow problems like this can be elided as long as a lot of new customers are being added. When new member growth slows or stops, or when legislated care guidelines start to hit, then you want to have gotten out of these stocks—or be short them. And in case you think they can just raise their premiums to meet Wall Street's quarterly estimates, you may not have taken the state regulators into account. They have a lot of authority, not to mention whistleblowing ability. New York's insurance department is already looking into the cash management practices of the HMO's under its jurisdiction. I wonder what they'll find? If I were long these stocks, I wouldn't wait to find out.

—JOHN DIZARD



"Must have been his first day on the floor."

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Addicted to Health

Government efforts to deal with tobacco companies betray an ultimate ambition to control Americans' lives.

ROBERT H. BORK

WHEN moral self-righteousness, greed for money, and political ambition work hand in hand they produce irrational, but almost irresistible, policies. The latest example is the war on cigarettes and cigarette smokers. A proposed settlement has been negotiated among politicians, plaintiffs' lawyers, and the tobacco industry. The only interests left out of the negotiations were smokers', who will be ordered to pay enormous sums with no return other than the deprivation of their own choices and pleasures.

It is a myth that today's Americans are a sturdy, self-reliant folk who will fight any officious interference with their liberties. That has not been true at least since the New Deal. If you doubt that, walk the streets of any American city and see the forlorn men and women cupping their hands against the wind to light cigarettes so that they can get through a few more smokeless hours in their offices. Twenty-five per cent of Americans smoke. Why can't they demand and get a compromise rather than accepting docilely the exile that employers and building managers impose upon them?

The answer is that they have been made to feel guilty by self-righteous non-smokers. A few years back, hardly anyone claimed to be seriously troubled by tobacco smoke. Now, an entire class of the morally superior claim to be able to detect, and be offended by, tobacco smoke several offices away from their own. These people must possess the sense of smell of a deer or an Indian guide. Yet they will happily walk through suffocating exhaust smoke from buses rather than wait a minute or two to cross the street.

No one should assume that peace will be restored when the last cigarette smoker has been banished to the Alaskan tundra. Other products will be pressed into service as morally reprehensible. If you would know the future, look to California—the national leader in health fanaticism. After a long day in Los Angeles flogging a book I had written, my wife and I sought relaxation with a drink at our hotel's outdoor bar. Our anticipation of pleasure was considerably diminished by a sign: "Warning! Toxic Substances Served Here." They were talking about my martini!

And martinis *are* a toxic substance, taken in any quantity sufficient to induce a sense of well-being. Why not, then, ban alcohol or at least require a death's head on every martini glass? Well, we did once outlaw alcohol; it was called Prohibition. The myth is that Prohibition increased the amount of drinking in this country; the truth is that it reduced it. There were, of course, some unfortunate side effects, like Al Capone and Dutch Schultz. But by and large the mobsters inflicted rigor mortis upon one another.

Why is it, then, that the end of Prohibition was welcomed joyously by the population? Not because alcohol is not dangerous. Not because the consumption of alcohol was not lessened. And not in order to save the lives of people with names like Big Jim and Ice Pick Phil. Prohibition came to an end because most Americans wanted to have a drink when and where they felt like it. If you insist on sounding like a law-and-economics professor, it ended because we thought the benefits of alcohol outweighed the costs.

That is the sort of calculation by which we lead our lives. Automobiles kill tens of thousands of people every year and disable perhaps that many again. We could easily stop the slaughter. Cars could be made with a top speed of ten miles an hour and with exteriors the consistency of marshmallows. Nobody would die, nobody would be disabled, and nobody would bother with cars very much.

There are, of course, less draconian measures available. On most highways, it is almost impossible to find anyone who observes the speed limits. On the theory of the tobacco precedent, car manufacturers should be liable for deaths

Mr. Bork is the author most recently of Slouching towards Gomorrah.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROMAN GENN

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caused by speeding; after all, they could build automobiles incapable of exceeding legal speed limits.

The reason we are willing to offer up lives and limbs to automobiles is, quite simply, that they make life more pleasant (for those who remain intact)—among other things, by speeding commuting to work, by making possible family vacations a thousand miles from home, and by lowering the costs of products shipped from a distance. The case for regulating automobiles far more severely than we do is not essentially different from the case for heavy regulation of cigarettes or, soon, alcohol.

But choices concerning driving, smoking, and drinking are the sort of things that ought to be left to the individual unless there are clear, serious harms to others.

The opening salvo in the drive to make smoking a criminal act is the proposed settlement among the cigarette companies, plaintiffs' lawyers, and the states' attorneys general. We are told that the object is to protect teenagers and children (children being the last refuge of the sanctimonious). But many restrictions will necessarily affect adults, and the tobacco pact contains provisions that can only be explained as punishment for selling to adults.

The terms of the settlement plainly reveal an intense hatred of smoking. Opposition to the pact comes primarily from those who think it is not severe enough. For example, critics say the settlement is defective in not restricting the marketing of cigarettes overseas by American tobacco companies. Connecticut's attorney general, Richard Blumenthal, defended the absence of such a provision: "Given our druthers we would have brought them to their knees all over the world, but there is a limit to our leverage." So much for the sovereignty of nations.

What the settlement does contain is bad enough. The pact would require the companies to pony up $60 billion; $25 billion of this would be used for public-health issues to be identified by a presidential panel and the rest for children's health insurance. Though the purpose of the entire agreement is punitive, this slice is most obviously so.

The industry is also required to pay $308 billion over 25 years, in part to repay states for the cost of treating sick smokers. There are no grounds for this provision. The tobacco companies have regularly won litigation against plaintiffs claiming injury on the grounds that everybody has known for the past forty years that smoking can cause health problems. This $308 billion, which takes from the companies what they have won in litigation, says, in effect, that no one assumed the risk of his own behavior.

The provision is groundless for additional reasons. The notion that the states have lost money because of cigarettes ignores the federal and state taxes smokers have paid, which cover any amount the states could claim to have lost. Furthermore, a percentage of the population dies early from smoking. Had these people lived longer, the drain on Medicare and Medicaid would have been greater. When lowered pension and Social Security costs are figured in, it seems certain that government is better off financially with smoking than without it. If we must reduce the issue to one of dollars, as the attorneys general have done, states have profited financially from smoking. If this seems a gruesome and heartless calculation, it is. But don't blame me. The state governments advanced the financial argument and ought to live with its consequences, however distasteful.

Other provisions of the settlement fare no better under the application of common sense. The industry is to reduce smoking by teenagers by 30 per cent in five years, 50 per cent in seven years, and 60 per cent in ten years. No one knows how the industry is to perform this trick. But if those goals are not met, the industry will be amerced $80 million a year for each percentage point it falls short.

The settlement assumes teenage smoking can be reduced dramatically by requiring the industry to conduct an expensive anti-smoking advertising campaign, banning the use of people and cartoon characters to promote cigarettes, and similar tactics. It is entirely predictable that this will not work. Other countries have banned cigarette advertising, only to watch smoking increase. Apparently the young, feeling themselves invulnerable, relish the risk of smoking. Studies have shown, moreover, that teenagers are drawn to smoking not because of advertising but because their parents smoke or because of peer pressure. Companies advertise to gain or maintain market share among those who already smoke.

Tobacco companies have regularly won litigation on the grounds that everybody has known for forty years that smoking can cause health problems.

To lessen the heat on politicians, the pact increases the powers of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco as an addictive drug, with the caveat that it may not prohibit cigarette smoking altogether before the year 2009. The implicit promise is that the complete prohibition of cigarettes will be seriously contemplated at that time. In the meantime, the FDA will subject cigarettes to stricter and stricter controls on the theory that tobacco is a drug.

Another rationale for prohibiting or sharply limiting smoking is the supposed need to protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke. The difficulty is that evidence of causation is weak. What we see is a possible small increase in an already small risk which, as some researchers have pointed out, may well be caused by other variables such as misclassification of former smokers as non-smokers or such lifestyle factors as diet.

But the tobacco companies should take little or no comfort from that. Given today's product-liability craze, scientific support, much less probability, is unnecessary to successful lawsuits against large corporations.

The pact is of dubious constitutionality as well. It outlaws the advertising of a product it is legal to sell, which raises the problem of commercial speech protected by the First Amendment. The settlement also requires the industry to disband its lobbying organization, the Tobacco Institute. Lobbying has traditionally been thought to fall within the First Amendment's guarantee of the right to petition the government for the redress of grievances.

And who is to pay for making smoking more difficult? Smokers will have the price of cigarettes raised by new

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taxes and by the tobacco companies' costs of complying with the settlement. It is a brilliant strategy: Smokers will pay billions to have their pleasure taken away.

But if the tobacco settlement makes little sense as public policy, what can be driving it to completion? The motivations are diverse. Members of the plaintiffs' bar, who have signally failed in litigation against tobacco to date, are to be guaranteed billions of dollars annually. The states' attorneys general have a different set of incentives. They are members of the National Association of Attorneys General, NAAG, which is commonly, and accurately, rendered as the National Association of Aspiring Governors.

So far they have got what they wanted. There they are, on the front pages of newspapers all over the country, looking out at us, jaws firm, conveying images of sobriety, courage, and righteousness. They have, after all, done battle with the forces of evil, and won—at least temporarily.

Tobacco executives and their lawyers are said to be wily folk, however. They may find ways of defeating the strictures laid upon them. It may be too soon to tell, therefore, whether the tobacco settlement is a major defeat or a victory for the industry. In any case, we can live with it. But whenever individual responsibility is denied, government control of our behavior follows. After cigarettes it will be something else, and so on *ad infinitum*. One would think we would have learned that lesson many times over and that we would have had enough of it. □

Just Can't Quit

MARK Twain's famous, century-old quip about giving up smoking—that it was the easiest thing in the world to do, he'd done it hundreds of times—might suggest to alert minds that the addictive properties of tobacco have been suspected for some considerable time. So the idea that tobacco companies should be made to pay a vast sum of money (a considerable proportion of it to lawyers) because their product caused people unknowingly to become addicted seems less than firmly grounded either in fact or in moral philosophy.

For the purposes of litigation—and for the self-deception of addicts—addiction is conceived as a kind of inescapable thralldom to a substance or, increasingly, to a behavior. (In the prison in which I work, prisoners often claim to be "addicted" to burglary or car theft, meaning that they do it repeatedly, find it more thrilling than regular work, are not responsible for it, and therefore shouldn't be in prison in the first place.) Once a man is an addict, he is in the grip of a terrible compulsion, which he is powerless to resist. He is as effectively enslaved as any African who took the Middle Passage in the eighteenth century.

This is self-deluding nonsense, of course. Addiction as a physiological phenomenon is real enough, but it is not inescapable servitude. There is no substance so addictive that scores of thousands of people have not been able to stop taking it. The withdrawal effects from a few—alcohol and barbiturates, for example—may be dangerous, but even they can be overcome with a little medical help.

In general, though, addicts grossly exaggerate the withdrawal effects from which they suffer, even when there are not billions of dollars in compensation at stake. One does not have to be Sigmund Freud to guess the reasons why this should be so: the flesh is willing, but the spirit is weak. When opiate addicts talk to doctors, they speak of their unbearable craving for the drug and their horrible withdrawal symptoms; when they talk to each other, however, they speak of the doctors who are most gullible and who will prescribe the most easily and liberally.

Addiction, though real, is a voluntary condition. The numbers of people coerced into addiction must be vanishingly small, though the numbers who claim such coercion are quite large. Last week, for example, I met a 45-year-old alcoholic patient who claimed that the cause of his 33 years of drunkenness was that, at the age of 12, he had been given gin to drink in the school lavatory by an older boy. As far as he was concerned, this single episode satisfactorily explained everything that had happened to him since. He himself bore no responsibility for his fate.

Coerced addiction, if it exists at all, is never at the hands of tobacco companies. The companies have never had goon squads to force us to light up, or to prevent us from giving up once we have started to smoke. In fact, it takes some determination to become addicted to tobacco: one has to overcome an initial natural reluctance to draw smoke into the lungs. And even once addiction has become established, it can be overcome by determination alone, as millions of people have successfully demonstrated.

Given the evident absurdity (and greed and wickedness) of the claims against the tobacco companies, why should the tobacco companies be so unpopular among the intelligentsia? Why should it be so widely regarded as just that the profits of the tobacco companies be expropriated from the shareholders by the litigators?

The reason, I think, is a reluctance to face the fact that Man is an imperfect or a fallen being, given to weakness, self-destruction, and folly. There is a Rousseauvian desire to believe that the common man, left to himself and uncorrupted by the tobacco companies and the distilleries, would subsist entirely on lentils and whatever combination of vitamins was currently said to preserve life. If millions of people smoke cigarettes, it is not because they enjoy them, are too weak to give them up, and have freely given in to peer pressure, but because they are the victims of diabolically clever and powerful tobacco companies.

We all want to believe that, while the Kingdom of God is within us, the Kingdom of Evil is elsewhere entirely. Or, to change the metaphor, that to get rid of the pigs is to transform the sty into a palace. Whatever the metaphor, we—the people—are not to blame.

—ANTHONY DANIELS

Dr. Daniels is the author of Utopias Elsewhere.

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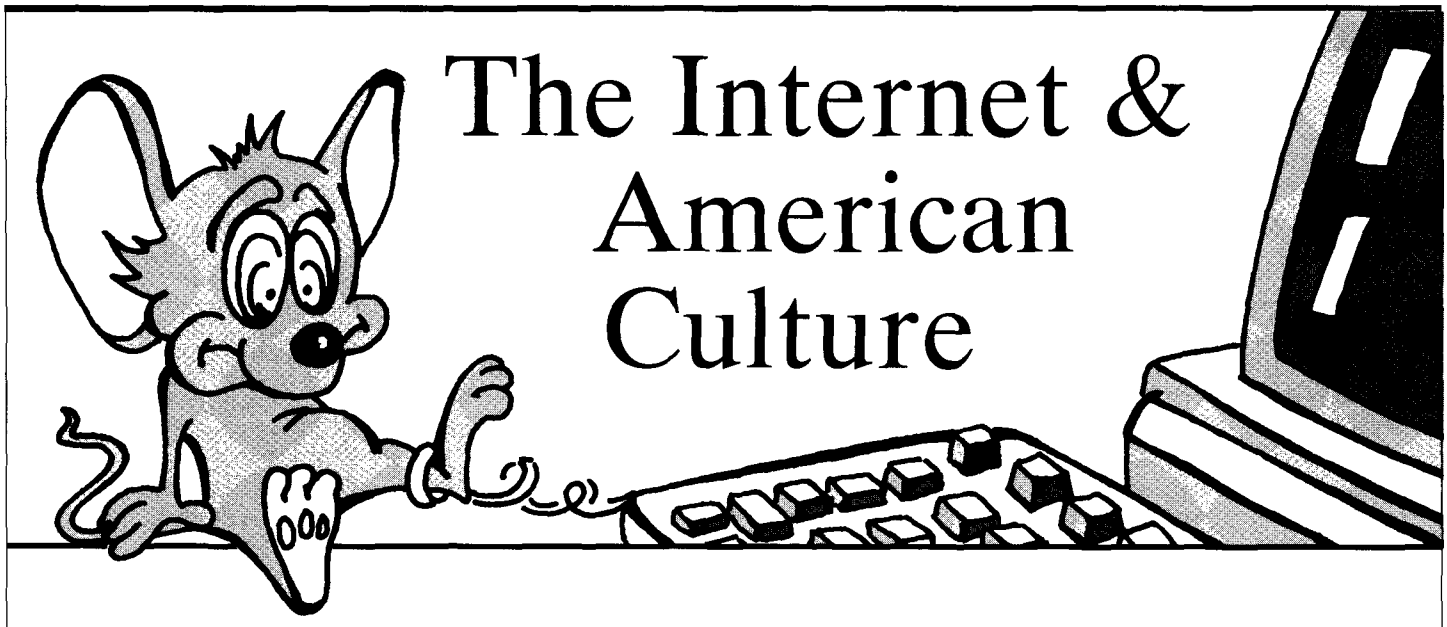

The Internet & American Culture

Surfing Safari

DAVID GELERNTER

THE Internet and the World Wide Web are unprecedented developments with vast power to change the culture, revamp the economy, and rearrange the future: so say the critics, whose critical distance tends to vanish immediately in the presence of technology. But the Internet is unquestionably important. Ours is a century of amazing technological achievements—and the Net has clearly shown itself to be more important than some (for example, Velcro) even as it is fated to remain less important than others (for example, sulfa drugs or radio, not to mention AC electric power or the computer itself). Major technology breakthroughs have changed the character of modern life, and the Internet is a major breakthrough. But we can't understand the Net unless we understand not only how it is new and different but how it is inevitable and how it fits in.

The Net has been open for business in one form or another since the 1960s; has handled large volumes of traffic since the mid 1980s. The World Wide Web brought the underlying technology to a larger public starting in 1994.

The web is unprecedented, and yet there are obvious points of comparison. Consider the trade show, where exhibitors deploy booths by the hundreds in a huge warehouse-type space, typically at a convention center. Most exhibitors are out to sell something; a few want only to draw attention to themselves, or to inform the public about some organization's good works. The typical booth displays text, flashy pictures, charts, pitches, and slogans. Trade-show visitors browse the booths collecting information, placing orders, and (the main attraction) chatting up the booth bunnies. (Booth bunnies are the young ladies who staff the booths—it's an honorable occupation, but hard on the feet.)

The analogy between a trade-show booth and a website is fairly close, bunnies excepted; the typical website is the same sort of glitzy amalgam of words and pictures, information and salespitch. On the web, booths are (of course) online; you can set up your own cheap, and browse any booth in the world from your desktop computer. The trade-show analogy illuminates certain puzzling aspects of the web. It hasn't been easy to get people to pay money for the privilege of visiting a website—but trade-show visitors don't expect to pay money to look at a booth either. Website newspapers and magazines haven't drawn nearly the interest that industry observers were expecting—but then again, if you were putting out a magazine, there's no obvious reason why pulling the latest issue apart and displaying the pages on a booth wall should be a good strategy for drawing readers. Trade-show visitors are in more of a shopping-and-browsing than a reading mood, and booth ergonomics are no good for reading. Website newspapers are flashy and timely; but as you read them you feel vaguely as if you were scanning *Izvestia* off a bulletin board in Red Square.

At all events it is new and different, this transnational 24-hour come-one-come-all permanent global trade show without booth bunnies. And it's working. Vast numbers of people patronize the cyber-booths, for the obvious reasons: they are monumentally bored, and can visit any site in the world without stirring off their rear ends. Anyone can use the web, but to be passionate about the web, to have *afición*, there is no alternative, *señor*; you must be *mucho* lazy and bored. But of course websites perform many useful functions too. They are particularly convenient for consumers who want information from producers—which happens to be the classic function of trade-show booths.

The Net has been open for business in one form or another since the 1960s.

The web is better than any trade show

Mr. Gelernter is a computer-science professor at Yale.

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insofar as it comes to you and not vice versa. The basic achievement of the web is to defeat geography, to diminish the significance of distance and physical separation. This is the fundamental achievement of the underlying Internet also—of electronic mail, file transfer, information sharing of all sorts.

The Net's tendency to undermine geography is real and significant. But it is important to bear in mind, as we grapple with its implications, that "undermining geography" is the story of modern technology from the start of the Industrial Revolution to the present. The Internet is new and different and, at the same time, it fits in perfectly. The railroad and telegraph and telephone were important because they made geography less important; cars and highways likewise, airplanes and commercial air travel, radio, television, communication satellites likewise: each one satisfied, in its own way,

The Net and the Self

THINKING about the Internet these days, I find myself preoccupied less with the system itself—how it all works, what it can and cannot do—and much more with the *idea* of the Internet, and in what ways, frontal or oblique, that idea impinges upon our cultural life.

The Internet in certain ways demands to be treated more as idea than thing. Though for any one user it is always some particular process of sending or receiving information, no transaction happens apart from the core potentiality of the system—the instant linkages possible.

The pressure, the impact, the implication of this potentiality is what interests me. How has it affected our thinking?

We can take air travel as a partial analogy. Here is a technological innovation that has concrete, practical effects: it gets me from here to there rapidly and allows me a certain range of activity otherwise not available. I can fly to another city, give a lecture, and return without having to cancel a class. But what is, in my view, far more consequential is that the *idea* of air travel has entirely infiltrated my experience of living in the world, and would have done so even if I had never had recourse to flight; has done so because I live in a social world conditioned by an understanding of time and space different from that of generations of forebears. Los Angeles has become a locale that is, in part, a function of access, of the hours it would take to get there (rather than the days, as formerly), even if I never go there. And therefore Los Angeles—the idea of Los Angeles, the idea which cannot be separated entirely from the geographical entity—is different.

This is fairly obvious, but I cannot ignore its bearing on the idea of the Internet.

While the concept of the Internet is somewhat revolutionary, the actual implementation by individuals does not manifest a revolutionary character. By and large, it functions—like air travel, say—as an augmentation. Air travel may be a monumental transformation of the existing, but if we fly twice a year, we are not likely to regard its effect on our lives as being monumental. For this reason, we often see the individual response to the media excitement taking the form of a bemused shrug.

Think of it another way—as analogous to global warming. The scientists who study climate are right to be alarmed about the possibility of a temperature increase of two or three degrees over a period of several decades, even if our local response is minimal.

I have these thoughts when people accuse me of making far too much of the microchip and the electronic network. But if I sometimes profess a certain alarm, it is at least in part alarm about the large-scale refusal to contemplate the systemic influence of these innovations, the fact that our picture of the world is being subtly but significantly altered.

When a massive electronic nervous system rapidly establishes itself inside the geographical corpus, allowing—as the sketchy preliminary systems like telegraph and telephone never did—rapid transfer of large quantities of information, complex interactivity, and so on, then the idea of connectivity truly becomes part of our sense of things. What high-speed air travel has done to the idea of place, the Internet is doing to the idea of individuality and isolated selfhood.

This is not necessarily bad, but it is a significant change and needs to be contemplated as such. There are those like psychologist/techno-theorist Sherry Turkle who prognosticate diverse scenarios of liberation. Mediated communication, Miss Turkle believes—and this is the thrust of her recent book, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*—will render human boundaries at once more permeable and more provisional; it will encourage the self to morph in diverse ways, slipping in and out of roles in ways that reflect an essential instability. We will stand free of the powerful constraints imposed by face-to-face situations.

Thinking in these terms, we begin to consider that the isolated self, the subjective individual, may be less a natural given than a phase in a larger evolutionary process. Is bounded autonomy a desirable characteristic in an age dominated by network communications and mediated (and increasingly virtual) experience?

But we cannot regard such transformation blithely. Upon our long-standing notions of self are predicated our laws, our social customs, our civic institutions, our conceptions of community, of art—of *everything*. It matters greatly how we come to understand the norms and possibilities of interaction. Communication is, as the theorist Mikhail Bakhtin understood, *dialogic*—is always happening between a specific sender and a specific receiver. When the process is transformed, by immediacy over distance, by the possibilities of anonymity and invisibility, and by the sense of endless potential networks running in every direction, we cannot expect anything to remain the same. This, the dissolving of what George W. S. Trow called the "grid of two hundred million" into the subjective space of the self, is the idea of the Internet, and it is an idea now in our midst. —Sven Birkerts

Mr. Birkerts is the author of four books of essays, including The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age. *He recently edited* Tolstoy's Dictaphone: Technology and the Muse *(Graywolf).*

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When was the last time you held a gold coin, or even saw one up close? How long have you been holding that peanut butter jar of pre-1964 silver coins? Are you conditioned to think of gold as something bought and sold, rather than as money for buying and selling other things?

Not too long ago, people used gold and silver coins as money... but there were problems. Heavy coins were inconvenient to carry around. Getting change also was a mess. People would sometimes cut coins into pieces, and spend them in "bits" ("two bits, four bits, six bits, a dollar").

Paper substitutes — which could be redeemed for gold — began to circulate. People would deposit their gold in a bank and use bank-issued receipts as currency. But banks issued many more paper (and book-entry) claims to the gold they held than there was gold to back the claims. The gold standard, in reality, was based on bank and government credit and used gold only as a reference benchmark. Periodically, governments needed to spend more money than they could raise by taxes or borrowing. They would allow or even force banks to renege on their redemption obligations in order to issue large amounts of new money.

> Although some are calling for a re-hash of the gold standard, we at Gold & Silver Reserve, Inc. think there is a better alternative – gold itself, circulated electronically; the ultimate e-money. This system is in place now; available via the Web. It's called **e-gold**™.

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mankind's perennial urge to be someplace else immediately.

AND given the web, how do we use it? Devoted web users "surf." If the Web is (in retrospect) an obvious piece of late-twentieth-century technology, Web surfing is the obvious way to use it in today's American culture. The various screen displays, pages, or images of a website are hooked together by "links," and separate sites can be linked together too. If you imagine a trade show with miles of strings connecting each booth to others all over the room, what emerges is something like Marcel Duchamp's bizarre installation of an abstract-art exhibit in Manhattan in the 1940s, or (alternatively) the World Wide Web. You can follow links effortlessly from one website to another, and web surfers dart for hours like cybersprites all over the globe, Bangkok to Rio to Amsterdam to Passaic at the click of a mouse button; wherever they are, other sites beckon. The essence of this activity is quick motion from one enticing, glittery entertainment to the next. This disinclination to stay with a thing, this tendency to ditch it and rush onward the moment it bores us: are we discussing web surfing or modern marriage? At any rate, we are a surfing society.

Some websites have succeeded as electronic shops. A site like Amazon.com is for many people an ideal way to buy books; Amazon itself keeps almost nothing in stock but can order almost anything. This type of website is a switchboard connecting far-flung buyers and far-flung sellers efficiently and anonymously—and is, again, a reflection of the modern way of doing business. It's no accident that a website like Amazon should emerge in the era of the warehouse store that is crammed with merchandise and staffed by anonymous blankly staring quasi-automatons. Amazon does the warehouse one better: if the latest Barnes & Noble is nowhere in particular, Amazon is nowhere at all, hovering in cyberspace. Many people dislike (or disapprove of) this way of selling, but they shop at Amazon anyway. I am a big Amazon customer myself.

Pornography is the most reliable money-maker on the Net; the Net reflects the culture. If the web were to disappear tomorrow and we were thrown back on mere videos and cable TV and phone services and old-fashioned magazines, ours would still be the Pornography Age *par excellence*.

In some ways the Internet has already proved itself a first-rate boon, and delivered on technology's most significant promise: to make life less of a nuisance, to cut down the overhead in our dealings with the modern world, and to give us time to think. The Internet is important, and in years to come it will change our lives. But other things are more important and will change them more. Compare the U.S. in 1960 and today. The technological changes are staggering—in medicine and pharmacology, computing and information management, entertainment, publishing, transportation. In 1960 certain things were simple: you had a heart attack, you died. Computers were room-filling wonder-machines and most people had never seen one. Home electronics consisted of a TV and a hi-fi, and the corner drugstore had a tube tester so that you could fix your radio when a tube blew. Air travel was a luxury. Nuclear bombs were rare and expensive. Technological developments have transformed the country since then. And yet those transformations amount to zero when you compare them to our moral and spiritual transformation over the same period.

An American of 1960 would find much to admire in the modern U.S.A. Our electronics are impressive, our airfares low. But imagine how he would react to the news that, here in the 1990s, a third of American babies are born illegitimate, a million children have been yanked out of school to be educated at home by parents who prefer frontier conditions to the sheer stupidity of modern education, less than a third of the murder cases in (say) Washington, D.C., yield indictments. In 1960 such conditions would have been regarded as barbarous, not possible in a civilized nation. Moral changes are the changes that have mattered, and moral choices will determine the country's future. The web will not.

As for the web, it has many good traits and certain bad ones, and is above all a sign of the times.

If it's such a humdrum development, why didn't I predict it beforehand instead of piling on now, after the fact? Some people claim that I did predict it, in a 1991 book called *Mirror Worlds* that described a net-focused software world in which you find out what is happening someplace by tuning in a "software version" of that place; real-world developments are reflected in the on-screen words and pictures of the software mirror world. Mirror worlds are a fancier and more elaborate idea than the web, and whether the book predicts the web is a question I don't take sides on. Nor does it matter; technological progress is measured in objects, not predictions. Nonetheless, I feel the same way about the actual web as I did about the mirror worlds of the book, which begins and ends in ambivalence. For the epigraph I used two statements contrapuntally intertwined, John Ruskin complaining about the railroads and a young London actress named Fanny Kemble enthusiastically describing her maiden rail trip. I love her ardor, and she explains perfectly why mankind is driven to concoct new machines: "no fairy tale was ever half so wonderful as what I saw." But Ruskin has a point too. "There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast."

Technology is wonderfully exciting—and ultimately irrelevant—but wonderfully exciting. That is a hard proposition to keep straight, but we have no choice. □

E-zines

PETE DU PONT

IN the 1770s, English tea and Adam Smith's concepts of the market helped begin a revolution. But they took weeks to cross the ocean in sailing ships.

In the 1990s, thanks to the microprocessor and the Internet, an information revolution is allowing ideas to sweep around the globe in an instant.

Were Smith alive today, he would see

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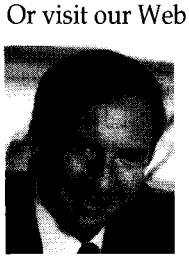

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the Internet as the ultimate frictionless flow of goods and services, his "obvious and simple system of natural liberty."

This rapid expansion of electronic communication has given birth to new journalistic creatures called "e-zines," electronic magazines that are to today's technology what *Newsweek*, *Forbes*, and *The New Yorker* are to print.

Thanks to technology, these e-zines can reach the corners of the globe instantly. So, for the first time, all the entries in a field of communication are competing on a level playing field. Which means, in the words of Michael Bloomberg, that "content is king; you've got to have good quality content."

Intellectual Capital (www.intellectualcapital.com) was created in June of 1996 to bring high-quality public-policy content to a global audience. *IC* is an original-content, weekly public-policy e-zine, available only on the Internet, and featuring analysis, opinion, and thought about a full range of public-policy issues. It is free to the user, and will be financially supported by advertisers. *IC*'s objective is to present each week a bi-partisan mix of articles that will leave its readers either applauding or seething, but in either case engaged in the debate.

IC's first year of publication saw more than 1,300 articles by guest editors and commentators ranging from NATIONAL REVIEW's Kate O'Beirne to the ACLU's Nadine Strossen; they have included Richard Pipes, former U.S. Senator Paul Simon, James Glassman, John Fund, and Hong Kong Councilwoman Emily Lau.

So what do *Intellectual Capital* and other online magazines bring to the reader that is different from what can be found in *Time* or a newspaper's Sunday supplement? First, the unique features of Internet technology give an e-zine a

Mr. du Pont is policy-chairman of the National Center for Policy Analysis and editor of Intellectual Capital.

Synthetic Rags

"WEB readers are different from print readers," notes *Intellectual Capital* editor Pete du Pont. "They like their articles shorter, they like them punchy, they like to get to the point in the first paragraph." The differences don't end there. After plunking down $2,000 for a computer and $19.95 in monthly service fees, web surfers expect more from an online magazine than they do from the $2.95 newsstand variety. Bells and whistles are important, so long as they don't impinge on ease of use, and interactivity and timeliness are crucial. But as with print, content matters most.

Although e-zines (periodicals that exist exclusively or primarily in electronic form, as opposed to websites for established print media) number in the hundreds if not thousands, most are glorified personal webpages, with long addresses and short shelf lives. (In general, the longer the Internet address, the less professional the operation—a long address indicates the Net equivalent of renting space in someone else's office.) In the political realm there are three established zines, and several up-and-comers.

Slate (www.slate.com), the product of Michael Kinsley's imagination and Bill Gates's checkbook, is a technical marvel—easy to navigate and loaded with animated graphics. It is also loaded with text—much of it from prominent journalists, much of it quite good, most of it quite liberal. Regular features include "the compost," a complete archive; "the fray," a readers' free-for-all; and a virtual "back of the book" of reviews, arts, and poetry. One drawback: *Slate* focuses more on what pundits say about issues than on the issues themselves. Navel-gazing has its limits, and animated graphics can be dizzying. For comic relief, see *Stale* (www.stale.com) and *Stall* (http://c3f.com/stall/).

Pete du Pont's ***Intellectual Capital*** is neither as hip nor as eye-catching as *Slate*, but makes up for its stylistic deficiencies with substance. Each week's issue features an extensive array of articles, from wonkish analysis to light satire, by an impressive crew of journalists (*NR*'s Rob Long, Kate O'Beirne, and Stephen Moore are regular contributors). Bi-partisanship reigns, with conservatives counterbalanced with the likes of Faye Wattleton, Nadine Strossen, and George McGovern. Interactive bulletin boards, which include several high-quality postings, follow every article—perhaps web surfers are more sophisticated than old-media types concede. *IC* dabbles with multimedia in the form of on-demand audio talks and interviews, the poor sound quality of which indicates that e-zines still have a way to go.

"We believe," write the founders of ***Salon*** (www.salonmag.com), "that communication in the '90s can be more than the ugly cacophony of talk radio." But *Salon* is better than its mushy bring-back-the-"civil"-in-civil-discourse mission statement. The site includes such bombastic columnists as James Carville, David Horowitz, and Camille Paglia (alternately castigating feminists and extolling Allen Ginsberg's pedophilia), and includes extensive, often contentious, bulletin boards connected to each piece. Kinder, gentler fare can be found in the "mothers who think" feature, a daily update for cybermoms (soccer moms beware), and in book, film, and entertainment reviews.

Among the less well-known, lower-budget electronic periodicals that merit at least one visit are: ***The Frumious Bandersnatch*** (www.bandersnatch.com) a (slightly) right-of-center humor weekly that, despite inconsistent wit and consistently bad design, scores points for sheer creativity. ***The Washington Weekly*** (www.federal.com) provides a much-needed conservative voice to the zine scene, but offers nothing in the way of innovative use of the new medium. Worse yet, its price tag: $16.95 for 48 issues—a steal by print standards, but highway robbery in the zero-cost world of electronic publishing (all the other zines reviewed here are free of charge). Like *IC* and *Salon*, ***Re:Focus*** (www.re-focus.com) does a good job. Each month, *Re:Focus* offers a dozen or so conflicting views on two controversial issues of the day (e.g., abortion, TV ratings, school prayer), lifted (legally) from policy statements by relevant journalists and advocacy groups. The format is impressive and simple to use, but the "balance" is overrated. Wanted: one good, unabashed (and free) right-wing e-zine.

—CHRIS WEINKOPF

Mr. Weinkopf is NR*'s online editor.*

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distinct advantage. There are direct "hot links" to source materials and research sites, audio and video features, and the entire year's issues of *IC* archived online, available with a mouse-click for reading or searching.

E-zine start-up and operating costs are low, and since the marginal cost of an additional column is virtually zero, content change can be nearly instantaneous. Even better, since there is no ink, paper, or postage to limit creativity or delivery, e-zine editors can concentrate all their energies on content.

Second, the medium allows e-zines a broad reach that puts information once available only to media, political, and intellectual elites into the kitchens of ordinary people all across America and around the globe. This will slowly change the balance of power in the policy debate, and ultimately the political economy of the world's nations. For Gresham's Law, the economic principle that bad money drives out good, has a reverse corollary on the Net: true information will drive out false.

The flow of information will also open previously locked cabinets, in government, industry, and academe. Decision-makers will have fewer places to hide; they will become more accountable for their decisions. And open decisions will be better decisions.

For example, Communism could not have taken root and survived for seventy years if even a small percentage of Russians had had access to the Internet and realized what was going on in the Gulag—and conversely what was going on in market economies around the world. Just as the fax machine drove the democratic upsurge of Tiananmen Square, the Internet will make government oppression even more difficult to enforce in the future. While *Intellectual Capital*'s interview of Russian General Aleksandr Lebed in November was interesting to our U.S. readership, it was *very* interesting to Russian Internet users.

Third, the Internet will speed the Americanization of the world. I am not speaking of McDonalds, Madonna, or Nike, but of the ideals and ideas of the American Revolution: the concepts of freedom, individual rights derived from our Creator, and the empowerment of people. These ideas are currently antithetical to much of the world—Belarus and China, for example—and countercultural in other nations in the Arab and Oriental worlds. But once unleashed they are powerful forces not easily contained.

For example, *IC*'s February 27 issue on the future of China following Deng's death provoked several thousand pages of views from Chinese readers both inside and outside China, and a furious ideological assault in Internet letters to the editor. For an American print magazine or newspaper to reach into the interior of China would present an almost insuperable challenge.

E-zines can create virtual magazines largely written by their readers.

Finally, and most important, e-zines can create virtual magazines each week, largely written by their readers. In recent issues of *IC*, for example, nearly half our content had been written by our readers. Live, direct-to-the-Internet "bulletin boards" at the end of each article and opinion piece bring readers into the policy debate, so that our writers are as much a catalyst as a participant. This phenomenon is unique to online publications, and is already building whole new policy communities, which will begin to influence the public-policy debate and ultimately the policy-makers.

It is unlikely that e-zines and online publications will displace existing information sources any time soon. But as Bill Gates said at the 1996 COMDEX conference in Las Vegas, while "there is no substitution effect yet, . . . it will come."

In fact, according to the Internet Advertising Bureau and Price Waterhouse, roughly one-third of home web users say it has displaced watching television and reading books, newspapers, or magazines. No wonder that much of the negative news about the "dangers" of the Internet comes from TV anchors and the mainstream press.

One thousand people a day are leaving high-tax states to live in lower-tax ones—voting with their feet. At least an equal number are voting with their fingers, and leaving the traditional media for the Net. Of course, New York and the District of Columbia are still here; just as CBS and the *Washington Post* will still be there. But as they follow readers and move much of their content online, their news policies will change. There is simply no need on the Internet for media filters like Dan Rather or Ben Bradlee.

Once upon a time, when walls surrounded nations and governments could rule all within, liberty could be restrained. But information technology has caused the walls to come tumbling down.

This new liberty is an opportunity for online publications like e-zines. Nearly two hundred years after the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, scientist Gordon Moore correctly predicted that the capacity of a microchip would double and its cost halve every 18 months. In other words, it continually becomes cheaper and easier to publish online, which will open huge new worldwide markets.

To paraphrase Adam Smith, e-zines are leading us to a world where every man may understand whatever part of other men's ideas he has occasion for. □

Political Networking

NORMAN MATLOFF

FUTURE historians may well mark 1992 as the year the Internet transformed American politics. Tens of thousands of Chinese nationals who were studying in the U.S. used university computer accounts in a brilliantly organized congressional lobbying campaign. At stake was the Chinese Student Protection Act (CSPA), designed to give blanket political asylum to an estimated 80,000 Chinese nation-

Mr. Matloff, a former software developer in Silicon Valley, is a professor of computer studies at the University of California at Davis.

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als who were in the U.S. during the 1989 student protests in Peking.

Use of the Internet was crucial to the campaign. The source of this blitz of bytes was the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars (IFCSS). With guidance from a prominent Washington law firm, the organization broadcast regular announcements over the Internet, providing telephone and fax numbers of key members of Congress, suggesting wording for the messages, and continually exhorting the students to keep up the pressure. At various points during the bill's journey through congressional committees, floor votes, and so on, an IFCSS coordinator would, merely by hitting the Enter key, send detailed lobbying instructions to tens of thousands of Chinese students nationwide.

A typical e-mail instruction was the one sent out when the bill reached the House Judiciary Committee.

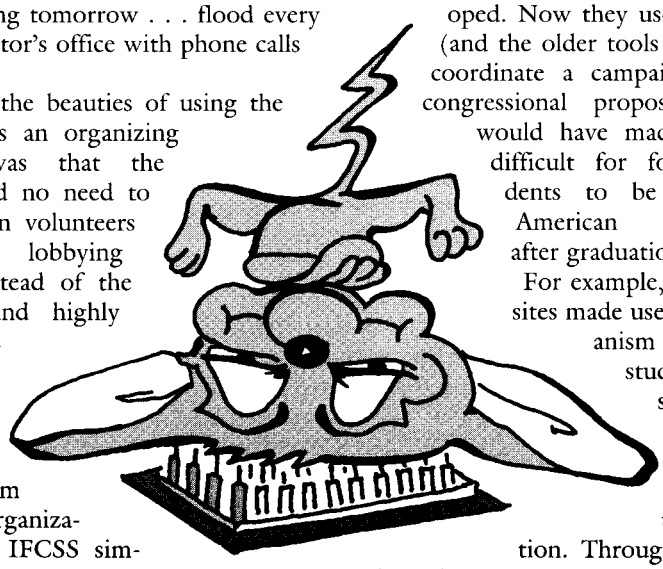
> At this moment, perhaps one of the most critical junctions, we strongly urge students across the country to call/fax [the following members of Congress] . . . Three members need to be targeted more than others . . . In addition to calling their Capitol Hill offices, students can also talk to directors of their district office at your localities. You may as well encourage your local newspapers to come up quickly with editorials on the issue—for sure, you may ask the [IFCSS] headquarters to provide technical support. You may also enlist your local American friends/groups to help, especially those with large or influential constituency.

Another typical message read, "We need to exert maximum pressure [on] the whole Senate as quickly as possible . . . Starting tomorrow . . . flood every single senator's office with phone calls and faxes."

One of the beauties of using the Internet as an organizing vehicle was that the IFCSS had no need to track down volunteers for the lobbying effort. Instead of the expense and highly hit-or-miss approach of purchasing mailing lists from other organizations, the IFCSS simply announced its efforts on the Usenet news group soc.culture.china, an Internet "chat room" for China-related topics, read by most Chinese students in the United States. The response was tremendous. The IFCSS also kept an eye on the bottom line: "Another matter that is crucial to us is funds . . . please support our effort by making a donation. Now is the time to do it." (The IFCSS, originally organized to promote democracy in China, later saw its membership plummet after the protection bill became law.)

Chinese students used the web to coordinate a campaign against congressional proposals which would have made it more difficult for foreign students to be hired by American employers after graduation.

The Chinese students found this experience exhilarating, and were later anxious to find new issues on which to lobby. As the Internet evolved, so did the Chinese students. Back in 1992 their electronic tools were state-of-the-art for that time, namely e-mail and Usenet news groups, but when their next big chance came, in 1995, the World Wide Web had been developed. Now they used the web (and the older tools as well) to coordinate a campaign against congressional proposals which would have made it more difficult for foreign students to be hired by American employers after graduation.



For example, their websites made use of a mechanism by which students could sign a "virtual" petition opposing the legislation. Through this they collected (and later presented to Congress) 15,000 signatures in just over a week's time—a feat that would have been impossible using conventional methods. They also set up another mechanism by which each student could send a single e-mail message to a given Internet address which would automatically forward copies of the message to all members of Congress who were considered crucial to the bill's fate. The UCLA webpage included talking points for use in phone calls to congressional offices. The instructions also advised the students to misrepresent themselves during these calls: "They're not supposed to check up on you. . . . Do not worry about your [foreign-student] status. Yes, you are counted as voting citizens because they never bother to ask the status."

As usage of the Internet has become more widespread, the variety of political uses has also broadened. And such methods need not even be focused on any particular piece of legislation. A good example is that of the cleverly named Mathematically Correct. This is a group of mathematicians and scientists who are alarmed at trends in math education in the California public schools. Their declared enemies, including dumbed-down curricula and de-emphasis on precise thinking and individual efforts, are leading our children down the road to innumeracy, the group believes.

Mathematically Correct's regularly updated webpage is a cornucopia of materials related to their crusade: news of pending legislation on K–12 math instruction; reviews of math textbooks; lists of "target" school districts in which concerned parents are urged to battle "fuzzy" math curricula; data on standardized test scores; and a host of newspaper articles and columns. One of Mathematically Correct's founders, math professor Wayne Bishop of the California State University at Los Angeles, says that the group began out of parents' frustration at the utter indifference educators showed to their concerns. The Internet, Bishop reports, has been central to the group's success so far.

Is all this impressive? Certainly. Is it technologically difficult? Absolutely not. Anyone with a modem and rudimentary knowledge of the Net can do it. And once the word spreads on how effective these tactics can be, we can all look forward to occasional days on which impending House votes cause traffic jams on the Information Highway. □

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Very Safe Sex

ROGER SCRUTON

PORNOGRAPHY is a trade like any other—involving production, distribution, and consumption. It differs only in the moral status of the product, and the special kind of corruption required in order to produce and consume it. The oddest thing about America is that pornography is nowadays deemed to be protected by the Constitution—while those who wrote and ratified the Constitution regarded pornography as so loathsome that it was unnecessary to forbid it. The production and retailing of obscene images have consequently grown, to become the largest and most profitable industry in the United States, with worldwide markets and constantly evolving technological achievements. You could find in its technical fertility a justification for the trade, as you can find such a justification for war, crime, and disease. For war, crime, and disease pose a challenge to human ingenuity, a need to get ahead of the competition, be it human or bacteriological. And this stimulates our creative powers. Indeed, war has been the most progressive force in history. Just so with pornography: for here is a product in constant search of new outlets, new forms of communication, new opportunities to pollute the dwindling store of human innocence. It is things like war and pornography that give progress a bad name.

There exists no more fertile breeding ground for the pornographic impulse than the Internet. Recent estimates suggest that 10 to 15 per cent of Internet users are searching for pornographic material. And the market is meeting the need with ever more sophisticated images, and ever more ingenious ways of turning sexual fantasies into cash. Image scanning is at an early stage. But you can be sure that, before long, the Internet will be passing along high-resolution pictures as good as the best TV, and the driving force behind this new achievement will have been the market in the sexual fix.

The same force led to the perfecting of the photograph, the video camera, and the movie screen. What is new is the withdrawal of pornography from the arena of shame. People could see you entering the "adult" video shop; they could discover the photographs in your drawer or the books on your shelf. Your secrets were not just guilty, but shameful. Technology now enables you to escape from the public eye. You can enjoy your sexual encounters in cyberspace, without the shaming contact with your fellow human beings. Sex on the Internet recalls Wilde's quip about masturbation: "cleaner, more efficient, and you meet a better class of person." Sex

Mr. Scruton is the author of Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic.

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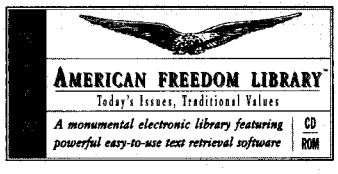
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has been confiscated by the machine, and virtual sex has come in place of it. Virtual sex is shame-free, since no one knows you are having it, not even the person *with whom* you are having it. And that which is shame-free soon becomes shameless.

Observers of American mores often wonder how pornography should have become an accepted part of the culture. What happened to guilt—the guilt which propelled this great society for centuries, and made it the model of respectability in a democratic age? The answer is that guilt goes the way of shame; it just takes a little longer. Abolish the witness and you have removed the mainstay of conscience. This does not mean that Americans have lost their puritanical instincts. It is rather that they feel guilty about other things—the things of which they can still feel ashamed. Public sins like smoking attract such outrage from the new puritans that TV idols cannot be seen to be committing them on the screen, not even with consenting adults in private. For smoking on the screen is a seductive message to the young and the innocent, inviting them to sin. Obviously, the solution to the problems now faced by the tobacco industry would be the virtual cigarette, which could be smoked in cyberspace, leaving no traces in reality. Smoking on the screen would then be as permissible as sex on the screen. The trouble is, how could you gain real physical pleasure from a virtual object?

In the case of sex the answer is clear. The encounter in cyberspace is merely the imaginative seed, brought to fruition by an act of masturbation. Ever since Americans accepted the view of sex propagated by such pseudo-scientific documents as the Kinsey report, they have been deprived of the concepts that would enable them to understand why masturbation is wrong. If all sex is a matter of pleasurable sensation, then what does it matter how it is produced, provided those involved consent to it? Masturbation has ceased to be self-abuse and become the most innocent form of sexual exploit—the only one in which no one but the agent is at risk. And other forms of sex are described and understood as a kind of masturbation *à deux* (or more). The sex of the partner is no longer morally relevant, and the single permitted moral question is the question of consent. The result is not Sodom or Babylon but a universal Onanistan.

The culture of masturbation spells the triumph of the individual, for whom even sex is a solitary pleasure, a private trophy brought home from the marketplace. The fantasies necessary to enjoy it are stored in cyperspace, which is a private space, a metaphysical nowhere between the individual and his screen.

It is easy to see why people are drawn to the culture of masturbation, and why traditional societies have striven to forbid it. For it is the enemy of social reproduction. People brought up in Onanistan avoid erotic attachments, and treat sex as a temporary transaction for the sake of pleasure. Love is no longer the meaning or the goal of their sexual emotion, and children, when they occur, are a byproduct of an exchange whose purpose lies in the moment alone. And with cybersex, the risk of children is finally eliminated.

Of course, the human race may still reproduce in Onanistan. But it does not follow that *society* will reproduce. For society depends upon moral capital, and this is transferred from parent to child, when the bonds of natural affection are sufficiently strong that the child acquires the motive to inquire, to learn, and to take responsibility for others. The Internet absorbs the reproductive energies of those to whom our moral capital has been entrusted—the educated, the competent, the explorers, all of whom can now sit before their screens, meeting a better class of person. Reproduction in Onanistan takes place outside the family: it is the business of the welfare mother, paid by the state to produce babies whom the state looks after in schools and penitentiaries. These welfare babies are the most wanted babies of all, since they too are a commodity, and worth their weight in gold. But they will not be vessels in which the moral capital of society can be stored. For nobody whom they will encounter during their formative years has any moral capital to impart to them, and none of their experiences will provide the faintest motive to acquire some.

Pornography on the Internet will accelerate the process whereby social reproduction comes to an end, and therefore help to bring about the most precious result of all, which is the end of Onanistan. □

Law in the Telecosm

PETER W. HUBER

THERE are only two basic engines for making law. One is top down: it is law by edict and national commission. The other is bottom up: law built by adjudication in common-law courts. One kind of law occupies thousands of pages in the U.S. Code and the Federal Register. The other evolves in the courts, as a pure product of common law, or under short, general mandates like the Bill of Rights or the Sherman Act.

The first century or so of law in the telecosm was given to the top-down managers. Herbert Hoover gave it to them. As a Republican, he liked free markets and private property. But as an engineer, he wanted things nice and tidy. Markets aren't tidy. Hoover had to choose. He chose wrong.

Hoover wasn't President yet—he was still secretary of commerce. The critical choice he had to make concerned a new industry called broadcasting. Westinghouse had opened the first radio station, KDKN, in Pittsburgh in 1920. AT&T went on the air in 1922. Stations were popping up all over the country, and no one was regulating them. They registered with Hoover's Department of Commerce, in much the same way as ships registered. But that was it. Nobody could stop you from going on the air.

What happened when an AT&T station tried to broadcast on a frequency already used by Westinghouse? The companies went to court. Courts were just beginning to develop rights of private property in spectrum, relying on familiar, common-law principles developed over the centuries in connection

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with real estate. But the common law is a messy business—as messy as the marketplace. Hoover wanted order.

Order had already come to telephones. In 1902 telephones had been messy, too. Half of all cities had two or more competing phone companies. They didn't connect with one another. That was a nuisance.

Anyone lucky enough to get a broadcast license took care not to offend the Commission.

In 1913 antitrust litigators hit on a solution. A consent decree forced AT&T to connect its long-distance network to independent phone companies. But by then it was already too late. People much like Herbert Hoover had taken charge. They solved the interconnection problem by abolishing competition. With only one phone company in town, it wouldn't have to connect to anyone but itself. That was tidy.

So by 1927 Hoover knew what he had to do. With the help of Congress, he nationalized the airwaves completely. He handed the ether over to a brand-new Federal Radio Commission. From then on, private ownership of any part of the airwaves was strictly forbidden. Private users operated only under short-term licenses, and under close federal supervision. The logic for this radical collectivism? Spectrum was too scarce to be owned privately.

And thus in 1934—while Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini were proving to the world the remarkable efficiency of national socialism, and while George Orwell was formulating his gloomy views about Big Brother—we in the United States folded all federal authority over both wireline and wireless communication into a new, superpowerful communications commission called the Federal Communications Commission. The Germans got an FCC, too, even bigger than ours. They called theirs the Bundespost. Joseph Goebbels loved it.

Our own commission never got that bad, but it got bad enough. Our airwaves were about as free as a high-school newspaper. Anybody lucky enough to get a broadcast license took care not to offend the Commission.

And telephones? Well, in 1954 the FCC invoked the full majesty and authority of the Federal Government to block sales of the Hush-A-Phone. It was a small metal cup sold by a tiny independent company. The cup attached to the mouthpiece of a telephone, providing a bit of privacy and quiet in crowded offices. The FCC said it was a "foreign attachment," a competing network that was attempting to interconnect with Bell. And competition was illegal. Interconnection was forbidden. There was talk of outlawing private sales of plastic slipcovers for phone directories.

The years passed. And then suddenly we woke up one day, and who was that on our telephone line? Markus Hess. Hess was a teenage mutant ninja, a hacker. His 1986 exploits would be recounted in Clifford Stoll's best-seller *The Cuckoo's Egg*.

Using pseudonyms like Pengo, Zombie, and Frimp, Hess and others like him were bent on creating electronic anarchy. So they began throwing electronic bombs. They attacked computers in Germany, Switzerland, France, and then the United States. For a while they seemed able to go anywhere they liked. And they did it all over the phone wires.

What had happened? One day you can't sell a slipcover for a phone book. The next, people called Zombie and Frimp are ambling down the international phone lines and into the most private recesses of your computer.

What had happened was this. First, Bell Labs had invented dial tone for computers. It was an operating system called Unix, designed for computer networking. Second, in the 1970s the FCC had finally grown fed up with the silliness of regulating slipcovers. And so it began instructing Bell to connect with its rivals: first the competition's phones, modems, and computers, then long-distance competitors like MCI, and then online servers—the building blocks of the Internet. Big pieces of telephony were being handed back to the competitive marketplace.

Consumers were startled. We'd been living under rigid state control for half a century. We didn't know a thing about free enterprise in this arena. We were like the Russians in 1992, trying to learn how to handle the free market. Hustlers like Zombie and Frimp had little trouble making fools of us.

Discipline was collapsing on the airwaves, too. The FCC had grown tired of running high-school newspapers, so it pretty much told broadcasters to broadcast what they liked. We got Jenny Jones and Ricki Lake—the Zombies and Frimps of the airwaves. They elbowed their way into our living rooms with tales of lesbian headhunters' preteen incest. We were too stunned even to turn the dial.

Herbert Hoover gave us the state, and when the state began to crumble, Markus Hess gave us a taste of anarchy. It is time now to return to where we started: common law for the telecosm. Get rid of the Commission.

Who then will oversee mergers and such, and manage the overall competitive structure of the telecosm? Markets, mostly; and antitrust lawyers, now and again. Most of the FCC's history in this area has been one of protecting monopoly—anaesthetizing the antitrust laws rather than enforcing them. What should we do? Privatize spectrum. Return the law of common carriage to common-law courts. Leave the rest to the market.

And what of the great issues of the information age: free speech and its complements, property and privacy? They too can be vindicated far better without a Commission than within one.

Indeed, they cannot be vindicated in-

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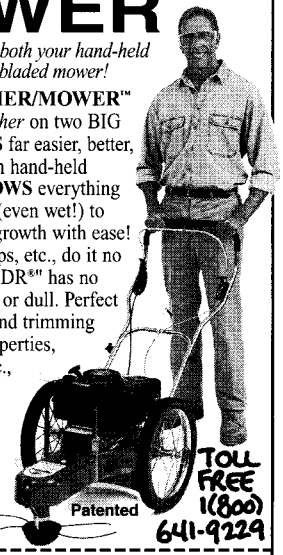

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side a commission at all. Every right to speak collides with some reciprocal right not to listen, not to be heard, not to surrender one's own words, thoughts, privacy, or solitude. The FCC tries, of course, to sort out conflicts like these. It gives a bit of free speech here, for political protest; a bit of copyright there, for cablecasters; and little privacy at the next turn, for people who might otherwise be harassed by tele-marketers. But such rights can never be successfully brokered by commission.

In the telecosm, as elsewhere, commission law leads society down the road to serfdom. However good the original intentions, central planning always ends up maintaining the privilege and power of the planners themselves. From markets and the common law, by contrast, there emerges spontaneous order that is rational, efficient, and intelligent. Though never planned, never even fully articulated, common-law rules adapt and evolve by common consent, like the rules of grammar. Society organized by commission is inherently limited by what the minds of the planners can grasp. Common law, in the aggregate, is far wiser. □

Spontaneous Disorder

NOT long ago, a manager of a giant Texas-based company wanted to sell his boat. In the old days, he would have posted a notice and a snapshot on the bulletin board in the employee lounge. This being the Nineties, he e-mailed everyone in the company a description of his boat's features and attached, of course, a few full-color images of the boat. As a result, his company's e-mail network crashed.

Incidents like this occur because massive e-mailings, especially with high-quality graphics, employ more bandwidth than the network allows. The fact is that a 15-second transmission of a high-quality video on the web (the multimedia aspect of the Internet) takes as much bandwidth as it would take to transmit the text of *War and Peace*.

The boat-marketing disaster is an example of what is known as internal spamming. The etymology of this new verb, to spam, is unclear. Most experts say its namesake is the canned lunch meat. Others attribute it to the Monty Python routine about mindless offerings. In either case, spamming is the act of sending unsolicited, mass-distributed junk e-mail.

Spamming has arisen spontaneously as an outgrowth of the fact that transmission costs on the web have been reduced to almost zero. When spammers hit users with thousands of copies of the same message, havoc is wreaked. When massive e-mailing clogs users' incoming mail, the affected ones are not only the targeted users but also everyone else on their network. Frequent delays can cause deadlines to be missed, and businesses to go under.

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Within an organization, abuse of technology is controllable by establishing explicit company policy and enforcing it with strict sanctions. However, on the web at large, there is no policy-making authority to establish the rules of the game.

Consider, also, what happens when spammers become spoofers. This is when an e-mail user takes on another user's name and e-mail address. Spammers do this to avoid receiving the angry responses of their victims. It is the innocent person whose identity has been usurped who will now receive all the bewildering hate mail. Spoofing is, in fact, the subject of a lawsuit filed on May 27 in Austin, Texas, which claims that Craig Nowak and C.N. Enterprise sent thousands of e-mails advertising free cash grants while using the plaintiff's name and e-mail address.

It does not take a dispute, however, for things to turn ugly on the Internet. Flaming—simple verbal abuse—has become strongly established in some Internet subcultures. If you think this would exclude lofty intellectuals, think again. A bunch of PhD candidates, all in the same discipline, were subscribed to a discussion list. No theme was given. Although the discussion began in a somewhat serious tone, one student guided it in a comical direction. Soon jokes became digs, digs became attacks, and the whole thing deteriorated into a Hobbesian world in which life is nasty and brutish, and tempers are short.

Did this experiment confirm Hobbes's pessimistic pronouncement about the nature of man? Certainly not. Man's social behavior is not static. It depends on ineffable rules of conduct which shape different types of social orders in particular ways. E-mail social orders are still new; the necessary rules have not yet evolved. Which does not answer the question: Should the Internet be regulated?

The most problematic area involves pornography. The Communications Decency Act (CDA) was conceived as a protective measure that would place the legal responsibility of policing children's access to sexually explicit material in the hands of the Internet businesses supplying it. However, even before the Decency Act was conceived, the Internet business community had already found ways to block access by children to what their parents deemed to be undesirable material. These mechanisms are still clumsy at best. The alternative government restriction, however, would have its own problems—we know that. Laws against selling cigarettes and alcohol to children do not stop children from buying them. Although on June 27 the Supreme Court ruled the CDA unconstitutional, other attempts are likely to be made with less restrictive statutes exactly to pass constitutional muster.

TWO bills have been proposed to curtail the problem of spamming. Sen. Frank Murkowski (R., Alaska) introduced on May 27 a complex bill called The Unsolicited Commercial E-mail Choice Act of 1997, and Rep. Chris Smith (R., N.J.) has proposed a simple amendment to the existing law pertaining to junk faxes. The problem is that legislation only addresses the symptoms; it does not cure the disease. The observance of rules of conduct is effective only when there is common agreement in a society.

The Internet business has the unique characteristic of having no resource monopoly power; hence, it poses no threat to users' choices and freedom. Any attempt to regulate the Internet market will harm both users and the Internet business community.

—GLORIA L. ZÚÑIGA

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BEYOND THE FRINGE

Nowhere Girl

With a disappointing record on fiscal and social issues, Christie Whitman may have gone as far as she can go.

KATE O'BEIRNE

WHAT went wrong? Only a few months after being sworn in as New Jersey's first woman governor, Christine Todd Whitman was widely designated a Rising Star in the national GOP. More than just a promising pol, she was the Republican "It Girl." *Mirabella* declared Mrs. Whitman "the new GOP superstar." To *Vogue*, she was "a patrician with a populist touch." Even George Will, writing in *Esquire*, thought Mrs. Whitman was comparable to Margaret Thatcher, but "without all that abrasiveness."

By the fall of 1994, she had been hailed by Newt Gingrich as worthy of any GOP presidential candidate's short list for running-mate (even though she had said she would have refused to sign the Contract with America). She campaigned around the country on behalf of a growing number of self-described "Whitman Republicans." And when 18 of the 22 candidates she campaigned for won, the press attributed the victories to her "Midas touch."

Republicans had every reason to celebrate a GOP tax-cutter as a remedy to their post-Bush malaise. The press too had found a Republican it could love. Asked to explain her defeat of Gov. Jim Florio, his campaign manager, James Carville, snapped, "It's a media hat trick. She has three things: she's a woman, she's pro-choice, and she's from a state close to the New York media."

Today, however, Gov. Whitman is in the doldrums. Instead of leading a wing of the GOP, she increasingly speaks for its liberal fringe. Her pro-choice absolutism has taken her to the extreme of supporting partial-birth abortion. She has become a symbol of country-club social liberalism to the national GOP, and especially to New Jersey conservatives. And the fault, dear Brutus, is not her stars, nor even in her polls, but in herself. It's genetic.

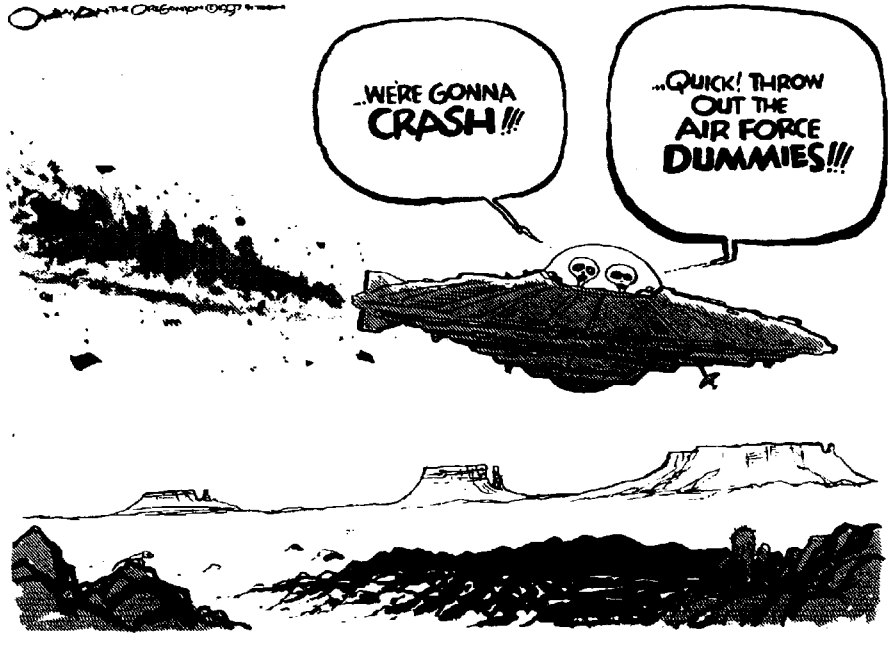
Christie Whitman is a child of the old-line Republican Party—almost literally. Chatting at a Republican convention, her future grandparents decided that two of their children might make a good match. They certainly had an impeccable GOP pedigree. Each of Mrs. Whitman's grandfathers, John R. Todd and Reeve Schley, did a stint as chairman of the New Jersey Republican Finance Committee, and her maternal grandmother, Kate Prentice Schley, was a New Jersey Republican Committeewoman. While dabbling in politics, both sides took care to build their fortunes. Grandfather Schley was vice president of Chase Bank, and Grandfather Todd (a scholarship student at Princeton) became a real-estate developer, built Rockefeller Center, and restored Colonial Williamsburg.

The money safely made, Mrs. Whitman's parents—Webster Todd and Eleanor Schley—were even more active in politics than her grandparents had been. From the time Christine was born in New York City in 1946, the youngest of four children, politics was as much a part of the Todd family legacy as the 232-acre farm in Northwestern New Jersey. Christine Todd attended her first national convention at the age of nine.

The Todds were firmly in the GOP's Eastern Establishment wing. Blocking conservative candidates has been a family affair for fifty years. Web Todd served as Wendell Willkie's state chairman in 1944, and backed Dewey over Taft in 1948 and Eisenhower over Taft in 1952. In 1960 and 1964, Mr. Todd was neutral, but Mrs. Todd backed Rockefeller, as did young Christie.

Indeed, as a Wheaton freshman she wrote a paper, "Campaign 1964," which described the conservative wing as a "thorn in the side" of the Republican Party and interpreted the campaign as a well-timed disposal of it. She remembers 1964 as "a very uncomfortable time to be a Republican, other than a Goldwater Republican. It was kind of like a holy cause, which is scary."

Back at Wheaton, Christine Todd invited Republicans like liberal Sens. John Chafee and Edward Brooke to campus. Her only demonstration was in support of reproductive rights. She



Mrs. O'Beirne is NR*'s Washington editor.*

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protested the arrest of abortionist Bill Baird for tossing birth-control pills to an audience at nearby Wellesley.

After graduation, Miss Todd spent the summer of 1968 working in New York City for yet another Rockefeller presidential campaign. Her mother chaired his New Jersey campaign, and her father joined other Northeastern party chairmen urging his nomination. Web Todd's failure to endorse Nixon in the primaries cost him a political prize he longed for—ambassador to Australia.

Not content with refusing to woo the Right, Whitman even tried to outflank Florio on the Left.

But Christie Todd won the support of the Republican National Committee for a program of her own design. She spent three months in 1969 traveling to 16 cities to interview blacks in ghettos and radicals on campuses in order to determine how they might be recruited for the Republican Party. She met with a Chicago gang called the Black Disciples and concluded they were largely misunderstood young people who just wanted to belong somewhere. Her overall findings? The blacks she spoke with felt that "The power in this nation is controlled by money." Older Americans were worried about inflation. As for college students, "Vietnam is a problem that has to be handled."

Christine Todd attended Nixon's Inaugural ball with a college friend, John Whitman, and not long afterward they married. The son of a New York City municipal judge, grandson of New York Governor Charles Whitman, and a decorated Vietnam vet, John Whitman graduated from Yale University and the Harvard Business School. It was another perfect match. John Whitman is on record as saying: "If the moderates don't get organized, then the lunatic fringe Right will take over the party."

After taking time out to raise two children (by all accounts, well), Mrs. Whitman returned to politics in 1980. She and her mother had not planned to attend the Detroit convention, but went because their candidate, an old family friend, was to be nominated Vice President.

Mrs. Whitman won office—Somerset County freeholder—first in 1982. It was a mixed blessing. Huge spending hikes she backed then—during her second term, the budget increased by 44 per cent—would come back to haunt her during her later statewide races. Then, in 1988 Gov. Tom Kean, a protégé of her father, made her president of the Board of Public Utilities. During her two-year tenure, the board's budget increased by 13 per cent. She also found time to help organize Republicans for Choice.

Mrs. Whitman left the Board to take on the seemingly thankless task of running against Sen. Bill Bradley, who had won six years earlier with 64 per cent of the vote. But fortune smiled on her. On the day she announced her candidacy, Gov. Florio unveiled his plan for a $2.8-billion tax increase, breaking his promise not to raise taxes. When Sen. Bradley refused to take a position on the tax hike, Mrs. Whitman accidentally became the standardbearer for New Jersey's growing tax revolt. How accidentally? Earlier in the year she had refused to take a pledge not to raise taxes herself. But by the fall the tax increase was her central issue. Sen. Bradley reasonably cited her record as a Somerset freeholder, charging: "She's the original tax-and-spend Republican." Even so, and though he outspent her by a massive $12 million to $1 million, she lost the election by just a whisker.

Mrs. Whitman didn't learn the lesson. In the primary campaign for governor in 1993, she bungled the all-important tax issue by denouncing a Republican-sponsored tax cut for the middle class. Worse, she backed away from a previous pledge to roll back the unpopular Florio tax increase. Following Mrs. Whitman's inept performance in the Republican primary—which she won by an anemic 7 per cent—Florio bounded back from a low of 18 per cent in the polls to become the frontrunner.

Mrs. Whitman promptly made matters worse. Throughout the summer, she refused to pledge not to raise taxes. Not content with refusing to woo the Right, she even tried to outflank Florio on the Left. In response to a proposal by Florio to deny benefits to welfare mothers who could not (or would not) identify their child's father, she asked: "What is the governor's next idea in his headlong rush to embrace extreme right-wing radicalism? A program of tattoos for welfare mothers? A badge sewn onto their clothing identifying them as welfare recipients? Creation of colonies . . . ?" All of which (plus her longstanding support for abortion rights, gay activism, and the Equal Rights Amendment) earned her a "recommendation" by the National Organization for Women—and a double-digit deficit in the polls.

Mrs. Whitman was rescued by her childhood friend Steve Forbes, whom she had appointed to co-chair (with Larry Kudlow) her Council for Economic Recovery. With six weeks to go before the vote, she embraced their plan for a 30 per cent cut in state income taxes. Ridiculed by the local media, the plan nonetheless put taxes on the agenda and reminded voters about Gov. Florio's betrayal. Mrs. Whitman came from behind to win—but by only 27,000 votes, or 1 per cent of the total.

Even so, the race made her a national symbol. And she was now in an excellent position to implement her agenda. New Jersey gives governors more power than perhaps any other state. And unlike past GOP governors, she had a solidly Republican legislature to work with.

She quickly moved to cut income taxes by the promised 30 per cent (though the top rates came down by much less). Before the third phase of her tax cut kicked in, however, she proposed a 62 per cent hike in the state's tobacco tax to cover a shortfall in the budget for health care. The Republican legislature refused even to vote on this, but the governor had sent an early signal she had no intention of making New Jersey live within its means.

GOV. Whitman had lectured George Pataki on fiscal virtue in his campaign—"the public understands . . . you're not going to get those kind of tax cuts without having commensurate cuts in spending"—but she funded the first phase of her tax cuts and closed an inherited budget deficit by reducing the state's contribution to its pension and benefits funds by $1.3 billion. She had (rightly) criticized Jim Florio for using such gimmicks, but gamely explained: "With this budget, we reduce our reliance on one-shot revenues by nearly one-half."

In the three years since then, revenues have increased enough to cover Mrs. Whitman's $1.2-billion tax cut. The snag is that in the same period there have been large spending increases—for instance, a $3.5-billion increase on road

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projects, which will add billions to the Transportation Trust Fund's debt. Similarly, her controversial $2.8-billion pension bond deal barely passed the Republican Senate this year. Not surprisingly, she will use $560 million from the deal (which will ultimately cost the state $14 billion in interest) to balance this year's budget (which is rising three times faster than inflation). Stephen Moore, who monitors state budgets for the Cato Institute, describes her complicated borrowing scheme simply as "an excuse not to cut the budget."

These shenanigans have given tax cuts a bad name. Mrs. Whitman's Democratic opponents claim, falsely but plausibly, that her borrowing was undertaken to cover the cost of tax cuts. In a recent poll, only 39 per cent approved of her record on taxes and the budget. And the record lags behind her promises. She had pledged to create 450,000 new jobs; the actual number is 182,000.

If economic conservatives can give Gov. Whitman's record only one cheer, social conservatives have even less to applaud. Once again she sent an early signal: four days after being sworn in, she declared the anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade* to be Freedom of Choice Day in New Jersey. Since then, as John Tomicki of the League of American Families points out, she has added Lesbian and Gay Pride Month and Coming Out Week, appointed a past president of New Jersey's NOW chapter as director of the Division on Women, and endorsed gays in the military. She even refused to apply for the $848,000 in federal funds earmarked for New Jersey to test an abstinence-only approach to sex education. Since the money comes from the feds, with no matching provision, and the Assembly passed a resolution 59 to 3 urging her to accept it, she is presumably against teaching sexual abstinence *in principle*.

School choice and welfare reform are two areas where economic and social conservatives can usually find common ground—but Gov. Whitman isn't on it. New Jersey lags in reducing dependency. Its welfare caseload is down a modest 10.2 per cent, ranking New Jersey 34th out of the 50 states. And the "work" program she designed is riddled with exceptions to the federally mandated welfare time limit.

She has similarly backed off on her promise to push for school choice. Having initially approved a choice plan for Jersey City that was limited to first and ninth graders, she retreated even from that and appointed a commission to study the issue. But she has ignored its recommendation that there be a pilot choice plan in each county. And when a school board in Morris County wanted to adopt a voucher plan, it was stopped by Gov. Whitman's attorney general and her education commissioner.

When Republicans complain about such backsliding, Mrs. Whitman justifies it as a necessary tactic for bringing new people into the Republican Party. It hasn't worked. Only 20 per cent of New Jersey voters are registered Republicans (versus 25 per cent registered Democrats). In 1996, Bill Clinton bested Bob Dole by 17 per cent in the state, and in the race to fill Bill Bradley's seat, "Whitman Republican" Dick Zimmer lost by 10 points to Democrat Robert Torricelli. Now the natural Republican base is eroding since conservatives see no room for themselves in Christie Whitman's GOP.

Ron Pezzullo, a self-described Reagan Republican, will run as the Conservative Party's candidate for governor in the fall. He faults Mrs. Whitman for ignoring her campaign promises on initiatives, referenda, and term limits. And he points out that she supports parental notification for body piercing and tattoos, but not abortion. But what especially distresses him—and other New Jersey conservatives—is her recent support for President Clinton's veto of the ban on partial-birth abortions.

This issue has also put her out of the GOP mainstream nationally. Only eight House Republicans voted against the ban. Even admirers of Mrs. Whitman concede that it knocks her out of the running as a national candidate. Lew Eisenberg, a financier who helped Mrs. Whitman create a PAC to support GOP liberals, favored the ban. But since her demonstration on behalf of Bill Baird at college, abortion-rights absolutism has been a core value for Mrs. Whitman.

She still enjoys a 50 per cent approval rating as she begins her re-election campaign against liberal State Sen. James McGreevey. She will probably win—perhaps by a smaller margin than most now predict—but she will not be hailed as the next Republican Veep. Her safest course would be to stick to the liberal Northeast and plan a run at the U.S. Senate in 2000.

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Three years ago, she could lecture Republicans about tough choices, smaller government, and the need to reach out to everyone. But her record defines a "Whitman Republican" as one who is hostile to conservatives and in favor of big government and radical social policy. Besides, a GOP dominated by conservatives offers a shrinking future for country-clubbers. Take William Weld of Massachusetts. He agrees with Mrs. Whitman on feminism, gay rights, and abortion absolutism, but at least he has cut welfare rolls.

And *he* is joining the Clinton Administration. □

Afta NAFTA

As free trade erodes the power of organized labor, union leaders are beginning to fight back.

RICHARD NADLER

IN Santiago on May 19, Commerce Secretary William Daley was at pains to reassure his Chilean hosts of the Clinton Administration's commitment to expanding the North American Free Trade Agreement. His task was complicated by the fact that during the 104th Congress, 110 representatives co-sponsored the NAFTA Accountability Act, a piece of legislation aimed at reversing the hemispherizing of free trade. Worse, its advocates included leaders of his own party.

The global capitalist transformation that President Clinton is overseeing faces strong opposition from both ends of the political spectrum. Lashed by Patrick J. Buchanan's blistering protectionist attacks during the 1996 primaries, Republicans distanced themselves from the trade-opening policies of Presidents Reagan and Bush.

Democratic strategists, aware that market globalization would weaken key labor constituencies, never embraced these GOP-negotiated pacts. "[D]rawn down by lower wages in Mexico," Rep. Dick Gephardt warned Congress, "our standard of living will continue to stagnate or decline. . . . the Agreement could exacerbate our worst economic problems: disappearing jobs and declining real incomes."

Thus were NAFTA and the Uruguay GATT round, products of a broad policy consensus, orphaned politically. Nevertheless, the orphans have thrived. Over the last three years, U.S. exports have increased 37 per cent. North American trade has increased 43 per cent, a gain of $127 billion annually. "If that gain in trade were a country," notes Heritage Foundation analyst Jack Sweeney, "it would be America's fourth largest trading partner."

During the NAFTA debate of 1993, the pact's proponents maintained that freer trade would, like any other tax cut, stimulate increased employment. These gains, concentrated in the high-wage export sectors of the economy, would exert a benign influence on Americans' income. Opponents countered that NAFTA, however it affected employment, would depress wages. Factor equalization in international labor markets would deindustrialize America.

Three years into globalization, it is no longer necessary to speculate: the free traders were right. In the triennium preceding NAFTA, worker compensation —wages plus benefits—registered only modest gains. Hourly cash compensation, adjusted for inflation, actually declined. But from 1993 through 1996, both hourly wages and total compensation increased in real dollars. Other measures of wealth—per-capita gross domestic product, disposable personal income, personal consumption expenditures—all rose substantially.

The best news came where the worst was predicted. After 1976, when 19.6 million Americans worked in manufacturing, U.S. industrial employment fell steadily. By 1982, 19.1 million were so employed; by 1992, 16.9 million. At the end of 1996—three years into the latest round of globalization—manufacturing employment had rebounded to 18.3 million.

The correlation between the increasing prosperity of American workers and international tax-cut treaties such as NAFTA is clear.

Never has so much good economic news been greeted with such incredulity by leaders in both parties. "We have got to find a way to export products to Mexico, not just our jobs and capital," lamented Minority Whip David Bonior, following a year of record growth in U.S. exports to Mexico and sturdy industrial-employment gains. "American companies are closing factories here," said Pat Buchanan, "and from Monterrey to Mexico City a new Detroit is rising."

The statistical fabrications upon which the myth of NAFTA failure is built are readily traced. Organized opposition to the world trading system is financed by the institution that has the most to lose from the new prosperity: unions.

Labor attorney Mike Dolan is the field director of Global Trade Watch, an umbrella group formed by his direct employer: Ralph Nader's Public Citizen. He has been touring the nation, reactivating the 1993 anti-NAFTA coalition. His express intent is to block fast track, the cornerstone of Administration-negotiated agreements for freer trade.

Dolan's audiences include trade unionists, movement ecologists, and elements of the Catholic Left. A typical anti-NAFTA working session, "Exploring the Impact of Globalization," held in Kansas City March 7 and 8, was co-sponsored by the Missouri AFL–CIO, United Autoworkers Local 249, Teamsters Local 41, the Roman Catholic Diocesan Office of Peace and Justice, and the Kansas Sierra Club. The majority of the 150 in attendance were union members. The focus of the conference was not the impact of NAFTA, but how to lobby congressmen and the press.

Dolan's chief presentation tool is a Global Trade Watch publication, *NAFTA's Broken Promises: Failure to Create Jobs*, which he co-authored. Against the blizzard of data proving the sector-by-sector success of trade liberalization, Dolan produces a flurry of anecdotes, liberally supplemented by outright lies. "The jobs that are being created [under NAFTA] are lower-paying jobs," he told his Kansas City audience. "The

Mr. Nadler is editor of K.C. Jones, *a midwestern political monthly.*

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500,000 laid off are not getting jobs equal to what they had. Why? Because the jobs being laid off are primarily in the higher-paying sectors—automotives, electronics, apparel."

But employment is booming in electronics and automotives. The low-pay U.S. apparel sector did lose 100,000 workers since 1993—the same number it lost in the three years preceding NAFTA. But the treaty saved the heavy end of the American textile industry. U.S. companies shifted apparel plants from East Asia to Mexico, enabling U.S. textile mills to regain their business in unfinished cloth.

"Exports support 11.5 million American jobs and have fueled one-third of our total economic growth since 1993," said Secretary Daley, "creating 1.4 million new jobs. These jobs pay more and provide higher benefits to U.S. workers than jobs in companies that do not export."

That Daley is now marketing free-trade policy to his labor-dominated party exemplifies the Administration's dilemma. Unions are rejecting global capitalism with a Democratic face, and they are making the Administration feel their pain. Labor's congressional shop stewards introduced the NAFTA Accountability Act, which reinterprets Clinton's trade success as failure. Its sponsors include such senior House Democrats as David Bonior, Ron Dellums, David Obey, Maxine Waters, and John Conyers.

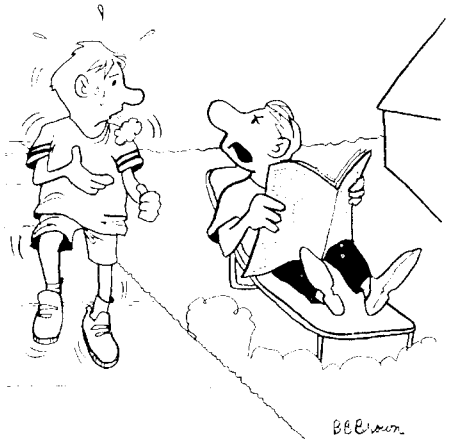
Under the NAFTA Accountability Act, Congress would monitor the success of free trade in North America, certifying or decertifying the agreement on the basis of American interests in job creation, domestic manufactures, and agriculture. But in detail, the act resurrects the discredited bilateralism of the 1930s. Trade is judged on an industry-by-industry basis, and all restructuring is implicitly condemned. The act's crude calculation of merchandise trade balances would, if generally applied, halt trade not only with Mexico, but also with Japan, Canada, Germany, Taiwan, Sweden, France, India, Portugal, and Israel.

Even its sponsors don't take it seriously. Dolan concedes that the votes don't exist to repeal NAFTA. "We're lighting a backfire," he explained to the unionists in Kansas City. "It's a vehicle around which to organize." The purpose of the act is to stall what the Clinton Administration wants: hemispheric trade liberalization based on NAFTA rules.

Global merchandise markets mean global labor markets. Since 1993, according to a Cornell research team headed by Kate Bronfenbrenner, employers have used the threat of plant relocation to discourage unionization. Since 1993, such threats sharply increased union defeats in shop elections. Plant relocation has been a common strategy for union busting throughout the years of factory rationalization, or downsizing. NAFTA incrementally reinforced a long-term trend toward freer labor markets.

Private-sector unions at their peak—1953—accounted for 36 per cent of total U.S. employment. By 1996, attrition had reduced union jobs to 10.2 per cent of the private workforce. But the worst news for union officials was not that their organizations faced extinction, but that workers would benefit thereby. As recently as 1982, union members enjoyed a 7.1 per cent advantage in total compensation. When Bill Clinton assumed office in 1993, collective bargaining yielded a meager 1.4 per cent edge. Since then, the lines have crossed. By March of 1997, union members earned 0.8 per cent less in total compensation than their non-union counterparts.

It is in this context that the hysterical disavowal of global trade by congressional Democrats becomes comprehensible. President Clinton's most significant economic triumph is premised on policies incompatible with the survival of his party's activist base. Union PACs spent $49.2 million on federally reported elections over the last cycle and another $9.5 million in soft money. Ninety three per cent of that money went to Democrats. The value of union-sponsored phone banks, mailing services, and get-out-the-vote drives dwarfed these recorded sums.



"I'm sure it's healthy. But I prefer to lead a life of quiet respiration."

But if the failure of Democrats to capitalize on the success of the Administration's trade policies highlights deep fissures within the party, Republicans have no such excuse. GOP sponsors of the NAFTA Accountability Act in the 104th Congress included such high-profile conservatives as Duncan Hunter, Zach Wamp, Helen Chenoweth, and Gerald Solomon. In a speech before Congress on March 12, 1996, Hunter claimed that between one and five million jobs had been lost to corporate downsizing over the past three years. "We seem to be giving our own country away" through NAFTA, GATT, the World Bank, and foreign adventurism, he said: "billions and billions to other countries while our own people head for the unemployment office or have to settle for jobs in fast-food restaurants."

By March of 1997, union members earned 0.8 per cent less *in total compensation than their non-union counterparts.*

The Buchananite backlash within the Republican Party is built on two serious misconceptions. First, some conservatives believe rapprochement with trade unions is possible on the basis of social policy. "There exists a range of issues," wrote Buchanan in *The New Majority*,

> "where . . . socially conservative Democrats are aligned on one side and liberal Democrats on the other." Such issues do indeed form the basis on which Republicans appeal to individual union members—but not to their unions.

A second Republican error is the notion that protectionism would preserve our "social contract" between nation and worker. "[T]here are higher things in life," Buchanan wrote, "than the bottom line on a balance sheet, or being able to buy Hong Kong suits at the cheapest possible price. Community and country are two of those things."

But protectionism will clearly

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wreck the social contract in a thriving economy that is 23 per cent devoted to an international trade employing 11.5 million domestic workers. In America, economic freedom is part of the social contract.

It was the achievement of Presidents Reagan and Bush to create an environment in which free labor could outperform the political labor model which was Marxism's last pragmatic claim on workers' allegiance. Republicans must understand the implications of a prosperous non-union workforce, and tailor their labor policy to the needs of a growing non-union majority.

But first they'll have to take credit for their historic successes. □

America's Crackup

In search of greater independence and autonomy, more and more Americans wish to secede.

THOMAS FLEMING

THE 1990s are a "time of the breaking of nations," as nationalist movements spring up over night and thrive in the thin soil of postmodern internationalism. The Evil Empire, dissolved in the early 1990s, continues to fission: even the city of St. Petersburg now wants independence from Russia. This same decade has seen the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia and the de facto partitioning of Bosnia along religious lines, as well as the peaceful separation of Slovaks and Czechs who clashed over the hyphenation of Czecho-Slovakia.

Just in the past few months, a group of non-Texans calling themselves the Republic of Texas attempted to replay the Branch Davidian soap opera; while in Venice, representatives of the *serenissimo Governo* took over the campanile of San Marco. The Italian media blamed the "terrorist" stunt on Umberto Bossi, leader of the Lega Nord. Bossi responded by declaring, "We're not terrorists, we're revolutionaries," and to prove the point, a group of his green-shirted followers seized the campanile again, this time peacefully.

Italians, Serbs, Ukrainians—what do they know about politics? It can't happen here, after all. But it has happened here, twice: first in 1776 and then again at the end of 1860, when some Americans decided they could no longer endure the "train of abuses and usurpations" practiced by governments installed in far-off London and far-off Washington.

Secession is as American as bootleg whisky and draft riots, and the history of the United States is sign-posted with independence movements: the attempt to set up a state of Westsylvania during the Whisky Rebellion; the Hartford Convention, which plotted the secession of New England during the War of 1812; the secessions of Texas, first from Mexico and then from the American Union. In Texas even today every man can be his own republic, or at least his own city: Ross Perot Jr. got tired of waiting for the Westlake City Council to help with his development of the 2,500 acres he bought. After the usual inducements failed, Perot decided to take his half of Westlake and run.

The fissioning of America is not confined to Texas. Several Indian nations have declared independence, and last year, in an informal referendum, Hawaiian natives voted for secession. West Kansas wants to break off from Kansas, counties are splitting, neighborhoods are demanding independence from cities. Apart from the bloody episode of the 1860s, American secessions have rarely been viewed with alarm. In the 1990s, however, with the rotting carcass of the USSR stinking in our nostrils, we are more inclined to consider them as a serious threat to national unity, especially since that unity is being stretched to the breaking point by ethnic revanchiste movements fueled by Third World immigration.

I don't think I have ever lived in a part of the United States where secession and autonomy were not major issues in local politics. In northern Wisconsin, where I spent my childhood, there has been agitation for the creation of a separate state of Superior, encompassing the northern parts of Michigan and Wisconsin. The justification was both cultural and economic: "Yoopers" have more in common with people on the Wisconsin shore of Lake Superior than either group has with the rest of its state, both regions suffer from unemployment and underdevelopment, and both speak a dialect unintelligible to outsiders. I once took a New Yorker fishing on the Brule River, and when we stopped for coffee, he asked me what language the waitress was speaking.

In New York, where I misspent a brief part of my youth, there is a movement to detach (or expel) the City from the State, and within the city, Staten Island wants to be free of Manhattan. To secede, Staten Island separatists would have to win a city-wide referendum, which would first have to be authorized by the legislature. But Republicans in the state Senate are unlikely to do anything that would allow Staten Island Republicans to lose the right to vote for Mayor Giuliani.

Upstate New Yorkers are even more distrustful of Manhattan than Staten Islanders are. Partly this is resentment of the big-city interests that seem to own state government. The deeper issue, perhaps, is cultural alienation. Upstate is Middle America, while the city is—well, something else. Bill Kauffman, conservative novelist and upstate patriot, insists that "a successful secession has to rest on a sense of cultural disfranchisement."

California is also experiencing cultural friction. In San Francisco, where I spent a year, many people endorse a proposal for splitting the state in three, while others dream of being part of Cascadia, a new nation that would include Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Cascadians are economic and environmental snobs, but their movement is also driven by the mass migration of Asians into the Pacific Northwest.

In South Carolina, the cradle of Southern secessionism, I lived in a village in the north end of Charleston County, where it sometimes took more than an hour for the county police to arrive, even in an emergency. There was constant talk of separating from the

Mr. Fleming is editor of Chronicles: a Magazine of American Culture.

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county and joining Georgetown County to the north. One frequently heard complaint was that our rural tax dollars were subsidizing the preservation of historic Charleston, where 40 per cent of the buildings are tax-exempt.

This complaint is echoed by the residents of James Island, which is being coerced into union with the city of Charleston. "Jim" Island, a poor and neglected community of 18,000 residents (40 per cent black), remained an unincorporated part of the county until four years ago, when residents voted to incorporate. Charleston contested the incorporation from the beginning, and in January the South Carolina Supreme Court agreed, ordering Charleston County to seize the town's assets. City officials mocked the island's inefficient government, but in less than four years, the town saved $3.5 million and acquired another million in property and nearly a million in equipment—all without levying taxes. William Regan, Charleston's city attorney, described the island as a "banana republic," but it is the city of Charleston that has a debt of Brazilian proportions.

Regan defends his mayor's decision to swallow up James Island, telling the *New York Times* that Charleston is "simply protecting its area of natural growth and development." James Island's mayor

Secession is as American as bootleg whisky and draft riots.

Joan Sooy describes this attitude as imperialism and compares Charleston's Mayor "Little Joe" Riley with Louis XIV. Mayor Riley's father, "Big Joe," was a major real-estate developer in a county where unrestricted growth has been a goldmine for investors but a disaster for smaller communities. Charleston's haphazard approach to development was Joan Sooy's main concern in seeking incorporation. As soon as developers succeeded in annexing a part of James Island to the city, they went ahead with the high-density development that has made traffic from Charleston to the island a nightmare.

In many American communities, the hottest political fights involve the public-school systems, and since the late 1940s, great battles have been fought over such issues as district consolidation and annexation. In Los Angeles, some residents of the San Fernando Valley have put forward a proposal to split up the huge Los Angeles Unified School District. For the Valley rebels, their cause is the latest phase of the American Revolution. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, at one meeting this year "supporters of a breakup quoted the Declaration of Independence and recited a litany of declining student performance and school-district excesses as their rationale."

The Spirit of '76 is being invoked by public-school protest groups all over the country. In Kansas City, and more recently in Rockford, Illinois (where I now live), federal judges have taken over control of the school system, opened and closed schools, dictated hiring policies, ordered massive busing plans, and raised taxes. All this is done in the name of "equality," which turns out to mean no education for all students, regardless of race. In a desperate search for taxpayers, cities are now run along the lines of a Ponzi scheme, which requires the annexation of new areas if only to keep up with the flight of the middle classes. In self-defense, smaller communities are taking steps to incorporate or to find some other means of protecting themselves against the incompetence of city governments and the arrogance of federal judges. (The West Kansas rebellion was set off by a decision to tax all Kansans for the Topeka school district.)

Patrick Henry objected to the Constitution of 1787, insisting that it gave too much authority to a faraway government. Henry's political enemy, Thomas Jefferson, agreed with him that the governing structures of the United States required decentralization rather than consolidation, and late in life he drew up a systematic plan for neighborhood government.

Jefferson was also the author of the Kentucky resolutions, the manifesto of state sovereignty invoked by Southern statesmen from John C. Calhoun to Jefferson Davis. States' rights used to be the rallying cry of Southern states, but apart from Alabama, where the governor has promised to defend a judge's right to post the Ten Commandments in his courtroom, the states of the Old Confederacy are too busy collecting their share of federal funds to worry too much about their rights. The real hotbed of states' rights today is the West.

THE mild version of the states' rights rebellion can be found in the various Tenth Amendment resolutions being introduced and occasionally passed in state legislatures. These resolutions reaffirm state sovereignty and issue a "cease and desist" order against the Federal Government, forbidding it to transgress its constitutional authority.

Perhaps the most militant resolution was passed in Alaska. Not coincidentally, Alaska is also home to a vigorous Independence Party, which elected a governor in the early 1990s. Their ultimate goal is a free choice from among the four options offered in 1958: territorial status, statehood, commonwealth status, nationhood. Alaskans, so they claim, are victims of colonialism by a government that continues to control the greater part of the state's territory.

Alaskans' objections to federally owned lands and unfunded federal mandates are shared by other Westerners, who are also talking about something called the "ultimatum resolution," sponsored by the Committee of Fifty States, which hopes to repass the original constitution without the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Amendments. Revolutionary talk, which sounds crazy in Washington, is commonplace in the West, where Republican legislators from several states have been holding meetings to work out a strategy of resistance to federal tyranny and mismanagement. These are not Gulf War vets with a copy of *The Turner Diaries* in their overalls, but mainstream Republicans who do not hesitate to use the word "secession" as the ultimate threat.

Even New England, the land of theocracy and aristocratic federalism, is not immune to secessionism. Some years ago in Vermont, a college professor made a stir with his campaign to point out the advantages of independence. Frank Bryan started the whole thing as a joke, but as he discovered that Vermonters were taking him seriously, he reconsidered. In *The Vermont Papers* (co-written with Vermont Republican John McClaughry), Bryan argued for the economic advantages of an autonomous Vermont. He contrasts the thrifty habits of Vermont villages that pay their debts with the debt-ridden government in Washington, which

(Continues on page 64)

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help!!!!

Katharine Hepburn: At 90

"You can
have everything,"
she said in her wise prime,
"but you can't have it all at the
same time."

—GLORIA A. MAXSON

"Now don't worry bout how I'll get along. I've already made a deal for your organs."

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"Look, Dear, Junior is about to leave the nest."

"Sorry, I can't help you . . . I suggest you try a publisher with that story."

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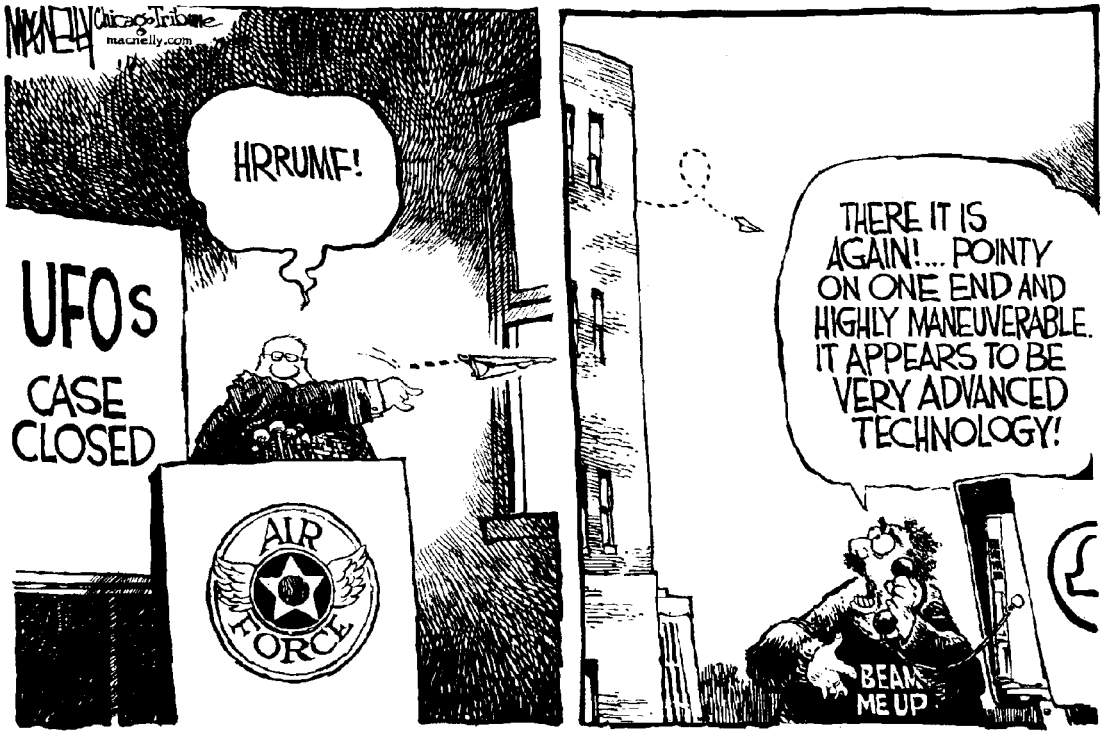

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"WHICH ONE IS THE COMPANY PREYING ON SMOKERS FOR PROFIT, AND WHICH ONE IS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PREYING ON AN INDUSTRY TO GET STATE REVENUE?"

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

July 5, 1997

Dear Rusty,

I take pen in hand (actually, word processor!!) to ask that you fully comply with the congressional subpoena that's either in your hand or on its way.

As you know, the Thompson hearings into alleged fundraising improprieties during the 1996 campaign begin this week, and I just want to make it clear that not only did we do nothing wrong, but it's hard to remember exactly who said what to whom about how much and where to send it.

Just tell the truth, Rusty, as you remember it (hey, memory can be tricky!!) and as you're pretty sure it probably happened.

To make the whole process easier, I've enclosed a laminated card listing all of the things that we here at the White House admit happened or have remembered happening up to 3 July 1997.

Throughout the week, we will be issuing continuous updates. We will do our best not to remember anything after you've testified not to remembering it (this is complicated, I know, but Lanny and Jack are pretty confident it'll work) but to be on the safe side, if you remember something you think you probably shouldn't have, or, worse, you remember something that you think it might be awkward for us to remember, it would be a lot better for all concerned if you could see your way clear to a) not really remembering it; b) letting us know a few hours beforehand that you do remember something that we haven't yet remembered; or c) waiting until the Pathfinder Mars probe sends back some really cool pictures.

Rusty, your loyalty means so much.

Tipper (for Al)

Dear Bruce,

I take pen in hand (actually, word processor!!) to ask that you fully comply with the congressional subpoena that's either in your hand or on its way.

It seems like yesterday that we were all working together for the common good—protecting Medicare, Medicaid, and the environment, safeguarding Social Security, well, you know the drill.

Anyway, I know you're going to be on the hot seat this week or next, at those bitterly partisan hearings, and I just want you to know that I've always been a fan, Bruce—I mean it, you've been a terrific counselor. Many's the time I've said to Bill and Hillary, "You know, that Bruce Lindsey is one terrific lawyer," and I meant every word.

But as we enter these next weeks, it's important we keep our eye on the big ball. And it's awfully hard to concentrate on the next presidential campaign with these distractions all over the place.

As terrific a lawyer as you are, Bruce—and I'm on the record as thinking you are one fantabulous lawyer—what you may have seen and heard here, or, worse, what you may think you remember seeing and hearing around here, or, even worse, what you may have erroneously seen and heard and jotted down on an index card or two, well, that isn't privileged information in the legal sense.

In fact, it's distinctly unprivileged.

You see the problem?

But Bruce, you've been a loyal soldier. I remember during the dark days after Vince Foster's suicide, how resourceful you were and steadfast. You have our undying thanks for that.

And, say, apropos of nothing at all, that Vince Foster guy—I mean, say what you like about the man, but he had some kind of courage, don't you think? I mean, rather than besmirch an entire Administration and derail an entire agenda with a lot of hooey and nonsense and I-did-this and They-did-that, well, let's be honest, he kept his mouth shut and got the job done, didn't he? He's a true hero, don't you think? And we could certainly use more heroes around here, don't you think?

Your pal,

Tipper (for Al)

Dear Karen,

I take pen in hand (actually, word processor!!) to ask that you fully comply with the congressional subpoena that's either in your hand or on its way.

You know, sometimes during all the craziness around here, we don't take the time to say "thanks" to the people that have served us well and loyally for so many years.

So, Karen, thanks—thanks for your hard work, for your dedication, for all those late nights—heck, thanks for doing the things that have now gotten us all into hot water with the Thompson committee. And, of course, along with our thanks comes a "Thank You" check for $73,000. Please wait at least 4 months to cash it.

We wish it could be more—but, as you know, there are so very many people to thank.

All the best,

Tipper (for Al)

PS: Terrific idea about the laminated cards! I think they turned out well, don't you? And we've left the bottom half blank, so you can make additions and deletions easily with a grease pencil!

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

The Jewish Question

MICHAEL MEDVED

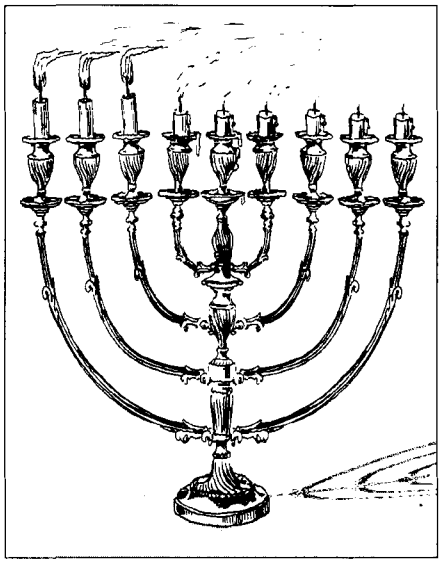
WHY do American Jews cling so tenaciously to their negative self-image as an oppressed and despised minority?

At the moment, the presidents of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and Dartmouth all happen to be members of this group of purportedly reviled "outsiders." The three leading Cabinet officers (at State, Treasury, and Defense) boast Jewish ancestry (even though William Cohen is only half Jewish), and in the last two years the secretaries of Commerce, Labor, and Agriculture have also been Jews, as have the head of the Federal Reserve system, a Director of Central Intelligence, and a Navy Chief of Staff. For years, the Supreme Court featured a single "Jewish seat," but now both Clinton appointees (Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer) are Jews. Despite the persistent Jewish assumption that American Christians harbor deep-seated anti-Semitic prejudice, voters in California and Wisconsin somehow managed to transcend such attitudes to such a degree that each of those states has elected two senators who describe themselves as Jews—as do six other members of "the world's greatest deliberative body."

Faith or Fear: How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America, by Elliott Abrams (Free Press, 237 pp., $25)

Aside from such high-profile evidence of acceptance, the over-representation of citizens of Jewish ancestry among America's doctors and lawyers, college professors and journalists, entertainment moguls, musicians, bankers, scientists, and sports agents is so blatant that neo-Nazi suspicions of a massive Elders of Zion–style cabal are, quite frankly, no more preposterous than Jewish paranoia concerning all-powerful anti-Semitic conspiracies.

In spite of the unprecedented position Jews have achieved in the United States, most of them continue to view hatred and discrimination from their Christian fellow citizens as a grim fact of contemporary life. One typical survey by the American Jewish Committee showed that by a jaw-dropping margin of 76 to 14, they believed that anti-Semitism is still "a serious problem for American Jews." An astounding 57 per cent felt that they "could one day face severe anti-Semitic persecution," and 41 per cent insisted that "Jews are widely disliked by gentile Americans." One 1985 survey by the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council found that almost a third of the Jews in their region said that they did not think non-Jews would vote for a Jew for Congress. At the time they offered this opinion, all three of the elected Representatives in that area were Jewish.



Given the staggering level of prominence and prosperity American Jews have already achieved, how much more successful do fearful Jews actually believe we could be if we were liberated from the allegedly "serious problem" of hostility from our gentile neighbors?

The bizarre fears that continue to haunt the ethnic and religious group that might well be characterized as America's most privileged minority are exposed and explored in *Faith or Fear*, a courageous and significant new book by Elliott Abrams. Mr. Abrams, an assistant secretary of state in the Reagan Administration, has already earned eternal gratitude from lovers of freedom for the anti-Communist Central American policy he helped to devise and to guide; he now commands new admiration for his relentlessly logical approach in distinguishing between the groundless fears of the Jewish establishment and the one great, authentic threat that American Jews seem incapable of confronting—the very real possibility of demographic self-destruction.

Mr. Abrams quotes Irving Kristol's insightful declaration that "the danger facing American Jews today is not that Christians want to persecute them but that Christians want to marry them." Indeed, current statistics on intermarriage suggest the rapid disappearance of the Jewish community in this country. The majority of Jews who have married since 1985 have married non-Jews, while the rate of conversion of non-Jewish spouses has declined to 5 per cent. Of these intermarried couples, more than twice as many celebrate Christian holidays as celebrate Jewish holidays (54 per cent versus 20 per cent); in fact, one-third of all Americans of Jewish ancestry no longer report Judaism as their religion. Such numbers threaten far more than ancient notions of racial or religious purity; for American Jews,

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intermarriage and assimilation represent a menace to survival itself. While Jews once made up 3.7 per cent of the U.S. population, their current representation has fallen to 2 per cent.

In the face of this crisis, the most powerful Jewish organizations in the country act as if the greatest dangers to their membership arose from the public display of the Ten Commandments (which, ironically, their own ancestors passed on to the world), or through government cooperation of any kind with precisely those religious day schools which have proved uniquely effective in promoting Jewish continuity. In recent cases before the Supreme Court, the Jewish establishment has fought to protect our nation from the unspeakable danger of a Rhode Island rabbi reading a prayer at a school graduation, and has struggled against a sect of Hasidim who had secured help from the State of New York for the education of their physically and emotionally disabled children. As Abrams pointedly observes: "The elements of the Jewish community having the greatest difficulty keeping their children Jewish used the courts to attack the practice by which the elements having the greatest success keeping their children Jewish were doing so."

Elliott Abrams's invaluable book occasionally seems to view Jewish faith merely as a communal rescue strategy.

Behind this insanity on the part of the Jewish establishment stands an almost pathological terror of any revival of traditional religious life, either Christian or Jewish. As Mr. Abrams writes of today's Jewish leaders:

> Their position presently stands revealed not merely as fear of government support for religion but fear of religion itself . . . American Jews believe simply as an article of faith that a more religious society threatens them—and this has been a much more powerful credo for the American Jew than any of the laws of Moses. Their adherence to secularism does not result from any survey research, sociological analysis, or political science, much less from their religion. It does not emerge from any insights into modern Christianity or for that matter modern American life. It is founded in fear, and though that fear can easily be explained by Jewish history, it cannot be defended by reference to Jewish interests today. It freezes American Jews into a pattern of thought and behavior that is unfair to their neighbors and damaging to their own future.

In order to secure that future, Abrams makes a powerful and utterly persuasive case for an urgent reappraisal of Jewish attitudes toward religious Christians. "Christians whose faithfulness to their religion, and ability to keep their children faithful to it, should be a model for Jews, are instead seen as bumpkins and bigots." Elsewhere, he is unsparing in his denunciation of Jewish hostility to Christian evangelicals in particular, highlighting the passionate evangelical support for Israel and the lack of any indication whatever of prevalent Jew-hatred in that community:

> Jews who believe that evangelical Christians are likely to be anti-Semites, and that Christian religiosity is associated with anti-Semitism, are indulging in prejudice in the dictionary definition of the term. They are prejudging their fellow citizens and condemning them for bigotry without evidence and without trial . . . Anti-Christian bias is apparently the only form of prejudice that remains respectable in the American Jewish community.

In one of his book's most striking insights, Abrams concludes: "Today, in a moment of historic reversal, Christians are becoming more respectful of Judaism than are Jews of Christianity." In short, the so-called Christian Right inspires terror in much of the Jewish community not because it represents a threat to Judaism, but because it represents a threat to secularism—which has become a surrogate faith for too many American Jews.

IN two compelling chapters, Mr. Abrams examines the profound changes in all major Christian denominations regarding their attitude toward Jews as reflected in official pronouncements and even Sunday-school texts. Here, he emphasizes the unmistakably heroic role of Pope John Paul II in repairing two thousand years of Catholic–Jewish bitterness. At the same time, he suggests that the evangelical denominations should do a better job of catching up to their Catholic and mainline Protestant brethren in presenting Judaism in a more sympathetic light in educational materials.

Abrams remains far more concerned, however, with the failures of Jewish education than with any shortcomings in Christian schooling. He is devastatingly effective in rebutting the trendy notion that huge new Holocaust museums and memorial programs concerning the six million martyrs can somehow produce stronger identification and commitment among American Jews.

> A Jewish community organized around Jewish victimization, suffering, tragedy, and death is unlikely to attract the passion of new generations. It is a fact that the Holocaust "revival" has not slowed the assimilationist trends American Jews are decrying; that is, study of the Holocaust has spread precisely during the years when intermarriage has as well, and ritual observance and synagogue affiliation have declined. If increased knowledge and feeling about the Holocaust are having an influence on the vigor of Jewish identity and solidarity, it is very hard to see.

He is equally dismissive of notions, advanced by Alan Dershowitz, Michael Lerner, and countless others, that some sense of nebulously defined "Jewishness," when yoked to liberal activism, can substitute for religious commitment. A 1988 survey for the *Los Angeles Times* demonstrated the destructive sway of such ideas. When asked, "What do you consider most important to your Jewish identity?" only 17 per cent of respondents said, "Religious observance," while 59 per cent answered, "A commitment to social justice." Attitudes of this sort take no note that such a commitment does nothing whatever to establish or sustain a distinctive Jewish identity. According to the leftist lights of most American Jews, Ralph Nader should be acclaimed for his characteristically Jewish "commitment to social justice" and "righteous" politics, although Mr. Nader happens to be an Arab-American.

Again and again, Mr. Abrams returns to his inescapable conclusion: "In the end, as always in Jewish history, substitutes for Judaism are false idols and following them is a path to ruin. . . . American Jewry will survive as a religious community or not at all."

No one has made this essential point more irresistibly than Elliott Abrams, and yet his invaluable book occasionally seems to view Jewish faith and Torah

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observance as merely a communal rescue strategy rather than the key to personal fulfillment. If the main argument for choosing religious commitment is its indispensable role in Jewish survival, then we will be able to press that logic only with those who already care enough about that survival to be willing to consider major changes in their lives. The real necessity for contemporary Jewish leadership is to turn the soggy logic of President Kennedy's famous aphorism on its head: to ask not what you can do for Jewish continuity, but what Jewish continuity can do for you.

The answer to that question should claim the attention of all American Jews, who suffer the same heartbreak and insecurity as their neighbors—facing shattered marriages, rude and self-destructive children, unbearably stressful two-career lives, the terrors of aging, and an underlying sense of disconnection and insignificance. Jewish observance cannot automatically solve any of these problems, but it can surely help with all of them. Mr. Abrams makes the idealistic case for Judaism—urging religious commitment as necessary for communal survival—but the selfish case, stressing benefits for individuals and families, is even more persuasive.

Abrams may well be in the process of discovering those benefits himself. In his preface, he explains, "I can probably best be described as a somewhat observant Conservative Jew," and as such he undoubtedly cherishes the crucial Jewish custom of Sabbath and Festival meals with family and friends. At such moments, with candles glowing over white tablecloths, lovingly prepared foods, blessed silence from televisions and telephones, joyous song, and the companionship of those in life who matter most, I doubt if Mr. Abrams's sense of satisfaction has much to do with the conviction that his home celebrations may effectively address the perilous demographic problems of the Jewish community. For most religious Jews, our pattern of observance represents God's gift to us, more than our tribute to him. Nevertheless, Elliott Abrams is entitled to feel proud that his personal commitments, as well as his penetrating and important book, make their own contribution to the ongoing struggle for Jewish survival. □

One Gospel Too Many

DAVID GELERNTER

NORMAN Mailer's *The Gospel According to the Son* is a rare spectacle: a novel powered not by imagination or language or character or story but by sheer arrogance. Try to fly such a vehicle and, naturally, you crash and burn. But I don't have the heart to join the tut-tutting crowd at the scene as the novel is scraped up and hauled away and the wounded author is rushed from the field. The *Gospel* is no mere whim but an obvious project for Mailer, and its failure is saddening. He has long been fascinated by the spiritual and supernatural. He has written brilliantly about antiquity. His prose at its best is powerful and his imagination is large, particularly when the topic is violence. Although the novel fails, the wreckage reveals something interesting about the author and about the retelling of Bible stories.

The Gospel According to the Son, by Norman Mailer (Random House, 242 pp., $22)

Mailer has been attacked for ruining the sacred character of the story, which is unfair; his book is strikingly orthodox. There is no trace of the *Vie de Jésus* tradition here. Mailer's Jesus is precisely the Son of God, who walks on water, heals the sick, raises the dead, and is resurrected to sit beside his Father in Heaven. Given which, the author has also been attacked for impersonating a Christian. If you believe this story you must be a Christian, and yet Mailer is not, and so he is accused of insincerity. Which is also unfair; a novelist is supposed to believe that his material is plausible, not true. But the charge of insincerity does point us in the general direction of the book's basic flaw. Piety limits a man but also strengthens him. When you simulate piety, you get the limits but not the strength. If you are going to retell the Bible, your duty is to add something, and Mailer has chosen instead to subtract: his story is like an actual Gospel with all the facts in place, but the intensity that comes of faith has been squeezed out. The wrung-out rind is insipid.

If you were going to add something, what would it be? The Gospel authors knew the feel of life in first-century Israel, and so did their earliest readers—and at any rate the details didn't matter to them. Mailer could have shown us what that life was like. His *Ancient Evenings* (1983) is a puzzling, horrifying, magnificent picture of ancient Egypt. No one has ever re-created such a distant era more vividly. ("Beneath the songs and disputes of the birds came a steady pumping from one shaduf above another, lifting water from the pool to a stream bed that led down to another pool . . . no sound was more virtuous than water being lifted by the strength of slaves. The streams were beautiful. The waters flowed over glazed clay and bricks and over precious stones.")

Norman Mailer's Gospel story gets dished out with stalwart indifference, like mashed potatoes in a third-grade lunch line.

In his *Gospel* Mailer has set himself once again the task of building images out of authentic material—the sights and sounds, tastes and smells, of the world Jesus knew. A daunting technical challenge. But this time he struggles listlessly and fails. The Lord can "destroy a kingdom as easily as a mouse is trodden underfoot!" Is that so? Upon how many mice has the author trodden? His Jesus is limp and colorless. "After school, on days when we would scuffle with each other, I would lose such fights as often as I won. How, then, could I be the Son of the Lord?" Such great questions are juxtaposed often with trivial domestic concerns—a defensible strategy, but executed without grace or conviction. The story gets

Mr. Gelernter, an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute, is the author of the semi-novel 1939. *He is working on a book about Saul and David.*

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dished out with stalwart indifference, like mashed potatoes in a third-grade lunch line. "Each day I came to understand a little more of why the Lord had chosen me." Check. "The soul can feel empty contemplating its sins." Okay. "And I prayed that the Lord would always speak through me." Check. "By the age of eight, I could even read the language of the old Israelites." So what? Hebrew at this point was written in the same alphabet as Jesus's native Aramaic, and the languages are similar. The author tries to resuscitate his dead prose by hanging out exclamation points. "Of course, they were terrified of evil from without!" "Of a sudden, I was up and above the waters! I was walking!" Yeah, yeah.

This Gospel is written in generic Bible-translation style—not the pricey Museum-Quality Reproduction but the Epcot Center Facsimile of King James English. The results run from awkward to ludicrous. "Often would I ponder," etc. The author tries to make modern thoughts at home in the ancient narrative by writing ponderously, like a tourist attempting to get through to foreigners by shouting. "I do not know how else to say it." For the young carpenter, it is not easy "to find communion with the wood."

Don't conclude that, because Mailer doesn't tell this story like a Christian, he tells it like a Jew. Jewish scholars have long rejected as impossible the Gospel account of the legal proceedings culminating in the Crucifixion, and Mailer is scrupulously faithful to the Gospels. The Gospels and the Jews disagree radically on the Pharisees: Jews see them as heroes and martyrs struggling to uphold the legal framework of Torah under the killing pressure of Rome. Mailer of course lines up with the Gospels, and it isn't clear that he understands what the normative Jewish view is. Of the Pharisees, he has Jesus say that they "did not believe that more would be demanded of them than good attendance at the synagogue." But the Pharisees demanded much more. The Torah commandments they codified governed every aspect of daily life. And in the normative tradition that emerged from their teaching, no principle was more important than *mitzvah tzrichah kavanah*—you have accomplished nothing whatsoever by carrying out a Torah commandment, zero, unless your heart is in it.

So the author isn't part of the Christian tradition, or the Jewish tradition, or his own tradition as represented by *Ancient Evenings*, and for good measure he has deliberately shot his prose in the foot. And thus his story is to be "leaned upon no more than a bush that tears free from its roots and blows around in the wind." This is one of his more effective passages—Jesus referring to the tales peddled by worn-out old men.

Still, it's not enough to dismiss the *Gospel* as a failure and move on, because its failure makes the nature of Mailer's real achievements clearer. Mailer at his best is a great writer, but his strong, distinctive style didn't come naturally; he struggled to create it. The brilliant phrases that flood a book with truth like the stained-glass light of a church never crop up, in Mailer, with the casual grace you encounter in Updike or Bellow, say, or Nabokov or White or Fitzgerald. But they do crop up. *The Naked and the Dead* was Mailer's first novel and made his reputation; it is a plodding book. ("He had made furious efforts for a time, launched that attack, had kept the troops patrolling constantly, but deep inside himself, unadmitted, he was becoming frightened.") The book ran seven hundred pages, and it taught its young author that editors were dispensable. But he obviously concluded also, to his lasting credit, that if he was going to be a famous author he might as well learn how to write. And there is nothing stronger or more vivid in modern American fiction than (for example) the opening of *Harlot's Ghost* (1991). A skid on an icy road: "The wall of forest on one side stuttered up to me, and my front end yawed when I spun the wheel, whereupon car and I rushed viciously across the lane toward the other wall of pines at the far shoulder." Violence was his specialty; he became a master at putting over violent characters and violent stories.

Some great artists (say Degas or Rodin or Picasso) are born with brilliant technique. Others who are just as great (like Cézanne) are born with more will and insight than technical means—and if you are a great artist in this second category, your work gains in depth, integrity, and power from your dogged technical struggles. Lack of fluency concentrates the mind. Of course there are disadvantages too. Unlike Updike or Bellow or Nabokov or White or Fitzgerald, Mailer isn't funny; he works too hard. And when his energy runs low, he never turns out a graceful minor work. He perpetrates a major wreck.

But a book this bad is the price we pay for Mailer's type of talent. It is a testament to the fine line he walks between brilliance and disaster, the risks he runs and the stupendous energy he pours into his work when he is writing well. The *Gospel* is a rotten book and the critics hated it—but not many of them liked *Ancient Evenings* or *Harlot's Ghost* either, and for all their faults both were masterpieces. Along with a million other readers, I am rooting for Mailer; if he pulls himself together, steers out of the skid, and gets this show back on the road, American literature will be stronger for it. □

Lost in Space

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Alien Agenda: Investigating the Extraterrestrial Presence among Us, by Jim Marrs (HarperCollins, 434 pp., $24)

So now we know. The controversy is over. UFOs are real, and never mind the latest Air Force denial, hopefully entitled *The Roswell Report: Case Closed*. Armed with the credibility that comes from a previous book that was "a major source for Oliver Stone's film *JFK*," Jim Marrs's "monumental undertaking" is, in the opinion of his publishers, "no less than the last word on the subject." Even for those members of the "smug . . . intelligentsia" who persist in their disbelief, this could make for an interesting read. For, as Mr. Marrs makes clear, UFOs are now part of our culture. That is why HarperCollins publishes this book, and why *NR* reviews it.

Aliens infest our airwaves and our bookstores. "Documentary" footage of

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the autopsy performed on one unlucky extraterrestrial has been shown on prime time. UFOs have been the subject of congressional hearings, and a President (well, Jimmy Carter) has reported a sighting. According to Gallup, more than 40 per cent of American college graduates believe that our planet has been visited by UFOs. Not always successfully. July sees the fiftieth-anniversary celebrations of the saucer "crash" at Roswell, New Mexico.

So a cogent presentation of current beliefs about UFOs, even if from a partisan viewpoint, would be welcome. *Alien Agenda* doesn't fit that particular bill, though it begins well enough. There is interesting speculation about the real nature of the moon ("The greatest UFO?"), followed by a brisk discussion of the von Däniken "God was an astronaut" school of ufology. But then we enter hyperspace.

As so often happens, the first sign of trouble comes with the "black-clad" SS. Can the 1947 UFO wave be explained by Nazi work on saucer technology? Mr. Marrs never really says. He merely leaves open the possibility, a possibility that he buttresses with anecdote and hearsay. True, he concedes that the idea of a secret Nazi base in Antarctica "stretches belief to the breaking point." But this is a pseudo-skepticism, typical of the somewhat unconvincing "objectivity" that permeates this book in the hope, doubtless, of giving it some faint plausibility. It is a clever approach, not too dissimilar from that used in other, less savory, areas of revisionist history. A defender of Stalin, for example, might "concede" that there were "excesses," while denying the existence of a deliberately murderous Gulag. In *Alien Agenda* Mr. Marrs may reveal his doubts about the Third Reich's Antarctic extension, but "there can be no question that the business and financial network created by Bormann wields a certain amount of power even today."

Note too the way that statement is carefully qualified. Writing that the Bormann crowd enjoys only a "certain" amount of power makes the assertion more difficult to challenge. The author manages to sound even-handed while at the same time leaving the impression of a still effective Nazi network. This is typical of a book where the author often will affect a studied neutrality over a particular UFO incident while leaving no doubt as to the general conclusion his reader should be drawing.

To be fair, Mr. Marrs never conceals *his* agenda. Moreover, his choice of evidence seems selective, to say the least.

Why the UFO cover-up? Oh, the usual. Monopoly of alien technology, that sort of thing.

Inconvenient facts tend to be treated cursorily, if at all. His language is just as revealing. The waspishly pedantic Philip Klass, whose skeptical writings are the best in the field, is little more than a "debunker." By contrast Linda Moulton Howe, the best-known proponent of the theory that aliens are experimenting on Western cattle, is an "expert."

Well, Mr. Marrs does not appear to be one. There *have* been sightings that are genuinely difficult to explain, but the details are lost as the author hurtles on in search of ever wilder stories. Even Jacques Vallée, one of the more prominent ufologists and no skeptic, will on occasion concede that a given UFO case runs into a "wall of absurdity." To Mr. Marrs, this seems to be no problem. He just jumps right over it into the arms of people like "Billy" Meier (or rather, arm—Billy has only the one), the Swiss handyman allegedly in touch with a civilization from the Pleiades. The other side of the wall is a place where our science (too puny, too materialistic) is deemed not to apply and the idea of objective truth is a mirage. It sounds, in fact, a bit like the United States.

Which is why this book has found a mainstream publisher. In a saner time, *Alien Agenda* would have been a crudely mimeographed pamphlet, pushed into your hand by a disheveled gentleman on a street corner. In the America of 1997 it will probably be a hit. And there is a sting in this campfire tale. The UFO myth mingles with and reinforces the other folk beliefs that increasingly shape a country where reason has gone quiet. Stories of alien abduction can easily shade into a belief in ritual child abuse. "Memories" can be recovered, families shattered, and innocents jailed.

This, taken to an extreme, can even lead to a Timothy McVeigh. In a way, this is not surprising. Saucer buffs have long reflected America's healthy distrust of government. When ufologist Stanton Friedman describes Roswell as a "cosmic Watergate," he can strike a chord with reasonable people, which Mr. Marrs then amplifies. Government becomes a monstrously untrustworthy, threatening presence. "If they lied about one thing [in the context of Roswell], it stands to reason they would lie about another." Really?

But Mr. Marrs is not so much a militiaman in the making as a potential leader of ufology's Buchananite wing. There is dark talk of the ruling elite. The alien agenda itself seems, by the way, to be something New Agely spiritual, but Jim Marrs is much more interested in the conspiracy down here. There is a cover-up, naturally. "They" don't want us to know what is going on. Even the "notorious" Trilateral Commission rates a mention. Silly stuff, yes. But of itself, not dangerous, just another drop in an ocean of nonsense. Why the cover-up? Oh, the usual. Monopoly of alien technology, that sort of thing. Buy the book if you still care. But here's a clue. WFB is mentioned not once, but twice.

Now are you scared? □

Mr. Stuttaford is a member of the smug intelligentsia.

Decline and Fall, Then and Now

HUGH LLOYD-JONES

THERE are many reasons to be grateful to Penguin Books for having brought out a handsome new edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, admirably edited by David Womersley, who has supplied a good introduction and bibliographical appendix, with other useful documents. One of these reasons is that Gibbon is the greatest historian who has written in English, and in more than one sense the earliest modern historian; a second is that he has always been con-

Mr. Lloyd-Jones was formerly Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford.

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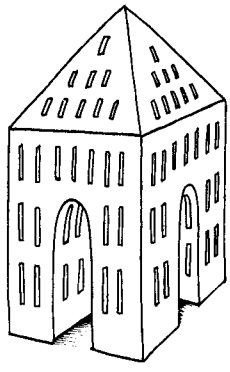
sidered to be and still is eminently readable; and a third is that his subject is a good deal more relevant to our own time than most of us seem to be aware.

We are well informed about Gibbon's life thanks to his autobiography—surely the best autobiography of a scholar in English, if not the best in any language—and to diaries of great interest. Born

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon, edited by David Womersly (Penguin, four volumes, $24.95 each)

in 1737, he was the son of a fairly well-to-do country gentleman, who sat in Parliament for some years. At the age of 15 he went up to Oxford, just at the time when that university was at the lowest point, so far as learning and education were concerned, in its long history. From his instructors he learned next to nothing, but he read widely. Trying to find his way through what he called "the dangerous mazes" of religious controversy, he "bewildered himself," as he later put it, "in the errors of the Church of Rome." His horrified father dispatched him to Lausanne, where he was placed in the charge of a Protestant clergyman, M. Pavilliard, who not only rescued him from Romanism but also introduced him to authors whose study set him on the way to his remarkable achievements.

At that time there was no other European country in which independent thinking flourished as it did in Switzerland. It was to Geneva that Piero Giannone had removed himself in order to publish his *Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples* (1723), an epoch-making work whose challenge to ecclesiastical dogmatism caused him to be lured from his refuge by pious persons and incarcerated for life. Geneva was at that time the residence of Voltaire, whose *Essai sur les Moeurs* appeared in 1756. Most important for Gibbon, it was at Lausanne that in 1748 Montesquieu had published his *Sur l'Esprit des Lois*. Here Gibbon was perfectly placed to become acquainted with modern European historical studies and with the philosophy of the Enlightenment.



There was available at this time a large quantity of learned historical writing. But much of it was of an antiquarian rather than a philosophical character, and it was looked down on by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, many of whom scarcely believed that historical truth could be discovered. Pierre Bayle, for instance, whose *Dictionnaire Philosophique* of 1697 was still influencing many, including Gibbon, affected a fashionable skepticism regarding history, called "Pyrrhonism" after the founder of the ancient Greek school of Skeptics. One sees that present-day "post-modernist" views of history are less novel than their holders think.

Montesquieu in *Sur l'Esprit des Lois* was the first to study the structure of human societies, examining their laws, customs, diet, medicine, social habits; he was the founder of modern sociology and anthropology. Reading Montesquieu, Gibbon saw a way of reconciling history with philosophy; his history is not a mere record of wars and politics, but a study of the culture and society not only of the Roman Empire in both the East and the West but also of all the various communities with which the Empire came into contact.

The first volume of the great work, published in 1776, begins with Marcus Aurelius, whose death in A.D. 180 ended the Antonine age, which Gibbon considered to have been the happiest period in human history. It describes the disasters of the third century and the revival of imperial strength under Diocletian (284–305), and ends in the reign of Constantine, who died in 337. The volume concludes with the two famous chapters on the Christian Church, which immediately aroused a storm of protest. In 1779 Gibbon replied devastatingly to his critics with a *Vindication* whose reprinting at the end of the third volume is one of the merits of the edition now before me.

The second and third volumes of the work appeared together in 1781. They start with the foundation of Constantinople in the early fourth century, soon followed by the division of the Empire into western and eastern branches, and go down to the extinction of the Western Empire by the Goths in 476.

Gibbon's original plan had now been carried out, but he decided to continue the history of the Byzantine Empire down to its extinction by the Turks in 1453; in 1788 he brought out the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes. The fifth described the Gothic kingdom in Italy and told how in the sixth century Justinian managed to reconquer that country, only for the Empire to lose it again through the invasion of the Lombards, and how in the seventh century Heraclius defeated the formidable Persian Kingdom, only for his work to be undone by the invasion of the Arabs. The fifth volume includes the famous chapters on Mohammed and the rise of Islam; later come the rise of the Slavs, the activities of Saracens and Normans in Italy and Sicily, and the desperate struggle with the Seljuk Turks. The sixth volume tells the story of the Crusades, with the brave revival of the Empire after the thuggish Crusaders' treacherous attack upon their hosts, and its final destruction by the Turks.

Gibbon's subject is more relevant to our own time than many of us seem to be aware.

Gibbon's mastery of the sources available for the subject of his work is amazing. Apart from historical and other literature, he had an expert knowledge of Roman law and an acquaintance with the Fathers of the Church, Church history, and other Christian literature that no clergyman could rival. Politically correct persons who suppose Gibbon to have cared only about Greece and Rome will get a rude shock if they actually read him; they will discover an astonishing knowledge of many different cultures.

From the first the book was enormously successful with the reading public; Gibbon writes with clarity, wit, and charm. It is a wonderful book to drop into at any place; I particularly recommend the chapters on the Church, the reign of Justinian, and the beginnings of Islam. The young Winston Churchill, in a cavalry regiment in India, read it right through, and founded his own style on that of Gibbon.

Gibbon's subject is by no means irrelevant to the problems of our own time. The main cause of the Empire's decline was the incursion of barbarians. They came from outside; but we are making barbarians of our own. □

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FILM

Cat and Bat

JOHN SIMON

BY Cédric Klapisch, the gifted director of North African descent, ***When the Cat's Away*** has a mistranslated title. *Chacun cherche son Chat*—each of us seeks his cat—is not about unsurveyed mice making mischief, but about everyone's quest for what he is missing.

Chloé, a young Parisian makeup artist, is off on a vacation, and must find someone to take care of her cat, Gris-Gris, whom her roommate, the homosexual Michel, refuses to look after. He has just split up with his boyfriend and, embarking on a new affair, wants no distractions. After many frustrating inquiries, Chloé is directed to Madame Renée, a bustling old lady of the *quartier,* who owns a batch of cats and agrees to board Gris-Gris. Returning from her solitary vacation, cleverly summed up in cinematic shorthand, Chloé is told by the mortified Mme Renée that Gris-Gris has vanished. The rest is mostly about the girl's desperate search for her pet.

Cat is a triumph of improvisation, authorial rather than thespian. It began as a short subject that blossomed midway into a feature. It was shot in the Bastille neighborhood, one of the most diversified, multicultural Paris milieus. Here the old and the new are jauntily jumbled, as in the two cafés where much of the action takes place: the time-worn, in-groupy Bar des Taillandiers and the modish, upscale Pause-Café. Half the cast are very young people, half old-timers; half professional actors, half amateurs. Half the film was written ahead of time, half each night before filming or even during next day's shooting. Characteristically, the trailer has almost nothing to do with the finished film.

What makes this heterodox stuff cohere? That it is really not about plot, but about a neighborhood and its denizens. An old church is being torn down, and we get troubling shots of that. Homeless men lolling about are coaxed into the proceedings; a couple dancing the salsa in the street was a plant, but a good one. Concierges, shopkeepers, a drummer whose banging keeps his neighbors from sleeping, a senile woman who repeatedly wanders off to be retrieved by the police, and sundry others figure amusingly. A slow-witted Arab, familiar with the territory, volunteers as co-searcher, and is more trouble than help as he falls in love with Chloé and wants to become her boyfriend.

The ending is a bit far-fetched, but after such a frolic one feels forgiving. One even felt at home among the xenophobic French.

We see Chloé at work at the ad-agency shoots, and the models, photographers, and supervisors who give her grief. We see her going out at night by herself. A painter who sings as he paints is nicknamed Bel Canto. He has painted Chloé through the window in postmodern distortion that flabbergasts her; still, he might become a boyfriend, but then he loses his lease and must move to the burbs. Guys at the bar horse around or try to make out. Cat-loving old ladies, friends of Mme Renée, keep watch for Gris-Gris from their windows or go out looking for him. There are a couple of seriocomic false alarms.

There is, further, Michel (Olivier Py, and funny) having his new lover move in with him. During the night, the lonely Chloé has to endure their loud sex across a translucent partition. In the morning, she has a curious encounter with the lover. There is more, much more: a wonder how a 95-minute film can contain such multitudes. Humor alternates with anxiety. And there are existential problems: why is Chloé's solid black cat named Gris-Gris, though it isn't always night, when all cats are *gris*? By the way, Garance Clavel, the charming actress who plays Chloé, supplied her own personal cat, Arapimou—that's the kind of film it is.

The ending is a bit far-fetched, but after such a frolic one feels forgiving. Why, one even got an insider's view of the genuine, non-touristy, everyday Paris: Laforgue's famous verse, "*Ah! que la vie est quotidienne . . .*" comes to mind. And, for once, one even felt at home among the xenophobic French.

■ The Batman movies have been getting progressively worse, which is fairly astonishing considering how low they started. Why can't our society leave the comic strips where they are? Why try to make Broadway musicals, Hollywood superproductions, and ever more colossal behemoths out of them? Because—horrible thought!—they make money.

In any case, ***Batman and Robin***, the fourth in the series, is without doubt the noisiest, emptiest, stupidest of all. It struck me as dumber than the dumbest comic strip, without an iota of continuity, structure, or even a semblance of sense. The soundtrack at the huge screening at which it was shown us was just one degree short of earsplitting, which is doubtless the only way the picture can be screened: under conditions that make the most rudimentary kind of thinking impossible. It was directed, like its immediate predecessor, by Joel Schumacher, who must not be overlooked in the most-offensive-director sweepstakes, and written, once again, by Akiva Goldsman, concocter of one of the most pretentious screenplays ever, *Silent Fall*, and the son of "two prominent child psychologists," which is at least one too many for any son.

For this reason, perhaps, the film features not one but two mad scientists, one of them Mr. Freeze, who, backed by his minions, can turn anyone or anything into an ice sculpture with his ice gun while laughing his blood-chilling laugh. He is played by a seemingly shaven-headed Arnold Schwarzenegger, who was beginning to look like some sort of actor until this fatal regression. Uma Thurman plays Poison Ivy, who wants to replace usurping mankind with hitherto oppressed vegetation, and who indeed has plastic leaves sprouting from her eyebrows and a hairdo featuring

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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what looks like two spindles bulging out of her head.

Mr. Freeze is maintaining his mortally ill wife, cryogenically and in suggestive attire, in a bell jar until he can cure and revive her. In that role, the dishy Swedish supermodel Vendela K. Thommesen does absolutely nothing even more stunningly than the Australian supermodel Elle Macpherson, who does the fiancée of Bruce Wayne, a/k/a Batman. Her histrionically demanding task consists of standing close to George Clooney and smilingly flaunting her deep décolletage. The beautiful black actress Vivica A. Fox is dragged in in a kitschy getup and platinum bangs, in the briefest of roles and skirts, as Ms. B. Haven (one of the many Goldsman puns that litter the dialogue), whose function in the movie the most dedicated chiropteromaniac, a/k/a batfan, could not begin to explicate.

In short, four beautiful women—two of them supermodels—either made to idle inanely or, like Poison Ivy ("the flower-power femme fatale, a vine-entwined beauty who can kill with a kiss"), striving to genocidally supplant man with plant. This demeaning use of gorgeous women clearly bespeaks an anti-heterosexual stance, to which we may add Alicia Silverstone's playing Batgirl as the graceless non-actress she is. The untalented Chris O'Donnell as Robin (really, Batboy, and clearly Batman's real heartthrob) runs her a close second. As for George Clooney as Batman, he wears the hard-rubber visor well enough to qualify for the next remake of *The Man in the Iron Mask*.

The movie comes across as a bigger, more scurrilous, and much more deafening version of the Halloween Gay Parade. Schumacher's last foray into Gotham City, Batman's habitat, yielded the highest-grossing picture of the year. The current grossout should outgross even that. Let us recall H. L. Mencken's celebrated dictum about no one ever going broke by underestimating the intelligence of the American people. □

DELECTATIONS

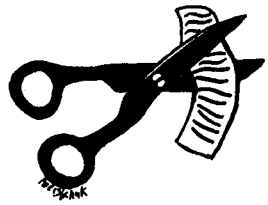
America's Genius

DIGBY ANDERSON

SINCE Tocqueville's famous study of democracy in America, foreigners have found many and varied things to praise here, not least size and variety in landscape and culture. But what really expresses America's genius for me is not the bigness of the country, the diversity of religion, the robustness of local association, or the entrepreneurship of business. It is, of course, motels. To be sure, Tocqueville did not get the opportunity to use them. So we do not know what else they might have displaced on his list of wonders. But I have, and they are at the top of mine, for they make other wonders possible and help you avoid distinctly unwonderful aspects of modern America. Such as hotels.

Now, in an emergency and for one night, there is nothing to beat the clinical efficiency of the American hotel. But by day two that same soulless efficiency has me shrieking to get out. Worst are the lobbies, the lines of unsmiling automata lining up to check in and out of identical rooms, all in identical clothes, to a background of identical music. How on earth do they know if they are in the right room with the right other person or even in the right hotel or the right city?

Or the right restaurant. For the breakfasts are identical too. Somewhere in the mighty U.S. of A. is a huge farm where they raise three varieties of hard, tasteless, and permanently unripe melons to fuel those breakfast buffets. As for the bedrooms, the problem is how to use everything. What does a single traditionally minded Englishman, whom public schooling has trained to regard more than one bath a fortnight as clear proof of predatory homosexuality, do with seven towels? Or indeed two emperor-sized beds? Or two dispensers of toilet paper both set up and ready to roll? Once, I seem to remember it was the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, I was given, for my sole use, two televisions. One was in the normal place. The other was in the bathroom. In that bathroom were two wash basins, and between them, wobbling on top of a stainless-steel rod, was a miniature television, so that while shaving I could watch the programs instead of my own face in the mirror, inflict on it a thousand wounds, and leach the blood into the two basins.



Motels don't have lobbies, to speak of. And if they do, you don't have to pass through them after checking in. They don't have melons and they keep towels to a moderate four. You need more anyway to dry the salad before you dress it or the shrimp before you fry them. For the best motels have kitchens. You can make a motel room your own. You can avoid the other unpleasant people that use the motel: there are only three yards of public territory between car and room doors. If the people are not unpleasant you can fraternize with them. Especially in warm weather, when they come out more, you can inspect them over the hours or days and work out whether they are pleasant and worth fraternizing with. A motel without a kitchen—and that means one with a proper stove, not a microwave—is not worth the name. The whole point of a motel is to make you free of the need to use restaurants. Restaurants in city centers can be tolerable, but outside they are pretty awful. Anyway, they have to be driven to. That means you can't drink much. And no gentleman dines without drinking well.

Mrs. A. and I have had some corking seven-coursers in motels throughout the country. One was very recently in Mobile during something curiously called Memorial Day Weekend. Not aware of this festival, we found motels heavily booked and had to use one rather down market. It was a curiously emboldening experience tanking through large shrimp fried in olive oil, pimento, and brandy, 15 blue crabs (which had fought like hell on being transferred from the bath to the boiling saucepan), grilled tuna with tomatoes Provençal, tomato, beef, and Puy lentils, salad, fruit, and cheese, all eaten with a stainless-steel fork and a plastic knife while we were surrounded by rooms

Mr. Anderson is the editor of Gentility Recalled: Mere Manners and the Making of Social Order *(Acton Institute).*

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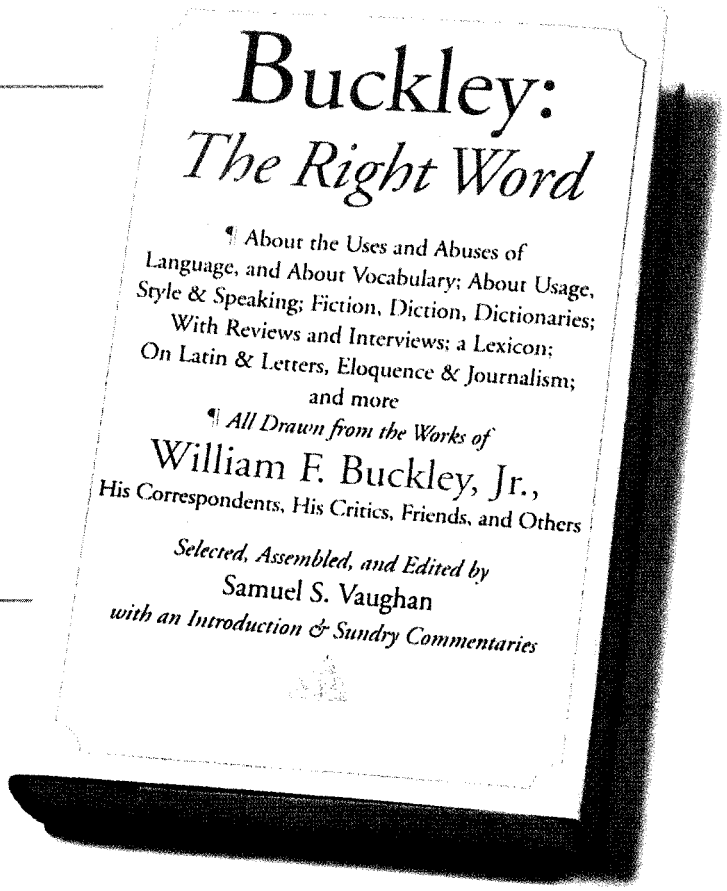
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stuffed with eight people each, all hollering competitively, each with his own large plastic radio, and all changing what I believe are known as partners. What they ate I do not know, but from time to time they would pass our open door to go and get more of whatever it was, never looking particularly satisfied.

Motels can be new and smart. We stayed in a very smart one in Bay Saint Charles, the Sun Suites, which had both knives and forks in metal. It also had a thoroughly equipped kitchen, a lounge area, bedroom, and all for $49 a day.

What does a single traditionally minded Englishman, trained to regard more than one bath a fortnight as clear proof of predatory homosexuality, do with seven towels?

They can be beautifully situated. One on the Gulf Shore in Alabama was surrounded by woods and, although two minutes from the beach, quite isolated from the masses.

They can provide entertainment. There is one in Hermosa Beach, California, right on the beach. I think it was imaginatively called the Ocean Breeze. (The names of motels are a subject in their own right. We must have stayed in five Lone Pines.) Looking out of the Breeze window or standing in the forecourt, we were afforded a 24-hour free spectacle of the California freak show: anorexic mothers on skates pushing their babies in carts before them, eighty-year-old joggers killing themselves by wheezing up and down the specially allocated freak track, women with all sorts of self-induced deformities busily acquiring more by doing that peculiar fast walk with elbows stuck out and buttocks jostling; occasionally they would lurch into a senile jogger. Young and old careen around on bicycles, all wired up to stereos so that they can't hear others approaching and crash into them, but all meticulously kitted out in helmets. The babies in the strollers wore helmets too.

Motels also provide indoor distraction. For in a motel there is always something that does not work. The first excitement is waiting to find what this may be. It often has to do with the plumbing. Favorites are showers where the drain outlet is blocked or wash basins where the plug is missing. Failing that, the air conditioning is a good source of surprises. I've spent many a happy half-hour in that fallow period between the end of the afternoon and the first cocktail of the evening trying to stop the basin with a lump of soap or working out which spike on the Swiss Army knife to thrust blindly into the air-conditioning box.

There is only one complaint I have about motels. And that is something that works too well. I don't want to get into a discussion about it here, but American bread is ghastly. So we either make our own or buy tortillas. These are cooked, of course, straight on the gas or electric burner to get that slight burned taste. I would be grateful to know the correct behavior to adopt when the smoke alarm goes off. As it has done in every motel we've been in recently. This is not just a question of etiquette—e.g., whether to affect nonchalance when the other motel residents offer help or send for the fire brigade. I'm interested because I prefer the large round tortillas. And Mrs. A. won't allow me those. She thinks they would set off the sprinklers, and that would make them soggy. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Actual, by Saul Bellow (Viking, 117 pp., $17.95)

SAUL Bellow's latest chronicles the forty-year obsession of the sixtyish "misfit" Harry with his sweetheart, Amy; the tale's dramatic action, such as it is, lopes around the exhumation of Amy's evil ex-husband. To the extent that this story works at all, it does so only because it has been written by Saul Bellow. Readers will be inclined to forgive its flaws—weak characterization, stilted dialogue, occasional mawkishness, overall sketchiness—and praise its intermittent poignant insights about love, fate, and stupid decisions. There are also scattered good lines ("I myself seemed to be doing an idiotic thing in looking for signs of highest ability in human types evidently devoted to being barren"). I'll take a middle ground: I doubt that anyone will find that *The Actual* matches the greatness of *The Adventures of Augie March*, but admirers are not likely to be sorry they read it. And at 117 pages, it shouldn't take long. —MITT BEAUCHESNE

The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy, by Daniel Pipes (St. Martin's, 404 pp., $45)

THERE is little to disagree with in Daniel Pipes's general thesis that the rulers and peoples of the Middle East are obsessed with the notion of conspiracies, whether homegrown or directed against them by the Western powers. What Pipes does not draw attention to is that a like obsession is a feature of Mediterranean life in general and of the Balkans in particular. Is there fire beneath the smoke, or is it simply an atavistic delusion? Pipes provides a virtual deluge of evidence from recent times, in the form of quotations from Muslim leaders, politicians, journalists, and propagandists, to prove his thesis. Many of his quotations are highly entertaining, ranging from the rococo to the near-lunatic. Yet a small doubt begins to form in one's mind as one plows through this seemingly limitless recital of instances of Arab or Persian ignorance, prejudice, and stupidity regarding Israel, the United States, and the Western world in general. Can one really categorize the entire Muslim community, or at least its major components, in this fashion? Is there no counterbalancing factor, no stoicism, no irony or sense of humor, such as is to be found, as Pipes must surely know, among the Egyptian *fellahin*? One would have more faith in his judgment if his pages were not so littered with elementary historical errors, grammatical lapses, and awkward neologisms. Still, he does on occasion provide light relief, albeit unwittingly, as when he describes Faisal ibn Husain as "military leader of the Arab revolt and T. E. Lawrence's partner." Well, we all know about Lawrence's predilections; but Faisal, too? —J. B. KELLY

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FLEMING

(Continued from page 49)

spends virtually a third of the federal budget on servicing the debt. Small wonder that in 1990 seven Vermont communities voted in favor of secession.

Vermont Federalists attended the Hartford Convention in 1814, where the Yankees were debating secession at the very time General Jackson's backwoodsmen were mowing down Pakenham's regulars at the Battle of New Orleans. The delegates had to sneak back home, but New England never felt entirely comfortable in a union with slaveowners, cowboys, or students at Big 10 universities. In 1844, Massachusetts threatened to secede if Texas was admitted to the union, and today there is a New England Independence movement, which makes the reasonable claim that the region cannot hope to defend its interests, much less its identity, within the continental empire that has replaced the old Republic. How many Yankees are left to heed the call? I do not know, but I was only the 720th visitor to their web page in the past year or so.

The Southern League, on the other hand, has had more than 78,000 hits during a similar period. The popularity of the SL website may be due to the persistence of Southern nationalism among all social classes—among intellectuals who read Donald Davidson as well as among truckdrivers who listen to Hank Williams Jr. ("If the South woulda won the war, we'da had it made.") But Dixienet is also among the most attractive stops on the information highway, and "rebmaster" George Kalas is swamped with messages of congratulation from all over the world, particularly from regions with their own independence movements—Scotland, Italy, Quebec.

As a Southern League member, I may be accused of partiality, but since its inception a few years ago the League has rapidly grown in numbers, influence, and recognition. The thousands of dues-paying members (with probably ten times that number of fellow-travelers) include dozens of scholars, journalists, and attorneys as well as a cadre of committed activists. This strange brew of intellectual populism has received lavish media coverage, including a BBC documentary.

The League's primary objective is "to secure the well-being and independence of the Southern people by all honorable means." The words of the statement (drawn up by historian Clyde Wilson) were carefully chosen, and Southern Leaguers will explain to you that they would be happy with the independence their states enjoyed under the original Constitution. Failing that, the states are free to pursue their independence in some other way. In either event, it is not up to the League but to the states themselves to make such decisions. As SL president Michael Hill explains, secession is not a private alternative, and he regards many so-called patriot and independence movements as nothing better than terrorists seeking to impose their own will on the American people.

What sort of a nation would the South be? Michael Hill points out that on virtually every conservative issue—from abortion to gun control—the Southern congressional delegation has voted on the right side. If it had been up to the South, Bill Clinton would have been handed a veto-proof ban on partial-birth abortions.

A writer for the *Wall Street Journal* suggested that Southern Leaguers have laid aside their nightshirts for coats and ties—a typical example of anti-Southern bigotry. In fact, the SL, which opposes both racism and the use of violence, has members of every conceivable religious and ethnic background. All they want is, in Jefferson Davis's words, to be let alone.

The United States remained, basically, a federal union down to the 1960s, when activist judges and ambitious politicians of both parties decided that the Constitution had outlived its usefulness. In a period of less than two centuries, this union of states had grown to be the richest and most powerful nation of the world. The consolidated union, on the other hand, is plagued by falling moral, economic, and educational standards; its political leaders are viewed as an alarming joke by our allies in Europe; and the very unity of states, classes, and interests brokered by the framers at Philadelphia is falling apart. In any major city, the peace is disturbed by Latino, black, and Asian nationalist gangs, which in some cases are only the shock troops of ethnic movements seeking the racial dismemberment of the United States.

In refusing to control immigration, the Federal Government is writing a script for ethnic civil war. Why? When I asked the Lega Nord's Umberto Bossi this question, he replied that governments welcome Third World immigrants both as clients of the welfare state and as a source of the disruptions that justify emergency powers for the national police.

When Americans make much milder criticisms of their leaders, the government's response is to equate dissent with rebellion. Bill Clinton complains that there are people who say they love their country but hate the government. Whom does he have in mind? Perhaps Washington and Jefferson, both of whom loved America but hated the alien regime in London.

With every new federal crackdown on gun owners, property owners, regionalists, and dissidents, resistance to the government will grow. Paradoxical as it may seem, the best way to preserve the union is to acknowledge the legitimate claims of the independence movements that are seeking local, state, and regional autonomy, because the only alternative to devolution is dissolution. □

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Siegfried R. Reiner

1 Y	2 f	3 U	■	4 b	5 E	6 W	7 M	■	8 U	9 W	10 B	11 X	12 G	■	13 M	14 E	15 B	■	16 T	17 R	18 J	19 L
■	20 X	21 Z	22 U	■	23 L	24 c	25 g	26 V	27 P	28 N	29 G	■	30 K	31 L	32 I	■	33 a	34 S	35 X	36 K	37 g	38 I
39 O	40 J	■	41 e	42 N	43 J	44 D	■	45 S	46 R	47 L	■	48 E	49 Z	50 C	51 b	52 c	53 W	54 V	55 X	56 Y	■	57 D
58 Q	59 P	60 B	61 a	■	62 H	63 f	■	64 L	■	65 c	66 Y	67 H	68 S	69 d	■	70 T	71 Z	■	72 S	73 E	74 A	75 W
■	76 L	77 W	■	78 Z	79 E	80 D	81 a	82 K	83 F	84 c	85 Q	■	86 S	87 E	■	88 U	89 W	■	90 R	91 g	92 V	93 f
94 A	95 B	96 T	97 O	■	98 N	99 G	100 F	■	101 K	102 e	103 X	104 V	105 N	106 E	107 I	108 Q	109 g	■	110 M	111 H	■	112 I
113 V	114 S	■	115 g	116 C	117 Z	118 b	119 P	120 F	121 a	122 f	123 X	124 d	125 e	126 R	■	127 O	128 Q	129 F	■	130 a	131 V	■
132 U	133 d	134 R	135 F	■	136 d	137 A	138 W	■	139 Q	140 C	141 H	142 I	143 M	144 J	145 g	■	146 D	147 V	■	148 J	149 A	150 T
■	151 E	152 G	153 V	154 L	155 I	156 d	■	157 K	158 Y	159 H	160 V	■	161 Q	162 P	163 c	164 J	■	165 O	166 W	167 C	■	168 N
169 H	170 Q	171 B	172 b	■	173 O	174 M	■	175 K	176 b	177 H	■	178 G	179 g	180 Z	181 b	182 H	183 P	184 d	185 B	186 W	187 f	188 X

DEFINITIONS

A. The last one was a Pahlavi — 74 137 94 149

B. Overjoyed — 15 60 185 95 10 171

C. Nelson victory between Cape Saint Vincent and Copenhagen — 116 140 50 167

D. Weft, to a weaver — 80 146 44 57

E. Poor Richard, for example — 73 48 14 79 106 5 87 151

F. Site of William the Silent's Prinzenhof — 129 100 135 83 120

G. Casts off — 12 99 152 178 29

H. Lycanthrope — 159 182 177 169 67 62 141 111

I. Former Tip of the House — 112 38 32 107 155 142

J. Corrupt, as in Hamlet's diagnosis of Denmark — 144 18 43 148 40 164

K. Scorching — 30 175 36 82 101 157

L. *Phineus's* winged tormentors — 31 64 19 154 23 47 76

M. Airborne — 143 7 110 174 13

N. Where Great Britain and the U.S. ended the War of 1812 — 105 168 28 42 98

O. England's "Historian of Liberty" — 127 39 165 173 97

P. Clumsy, incompetent — 119 183 59 162 27

Q. Matrimonial — 128 161 139 108 58 170 85

R. One of the Seven Deadly sins — 126 134 17 90 46

S. Alehouse — 45 86 72 68 114 34

T. Offspring, Biblically speaking — 70 96 150 16

U. Chose — 8 132 88 3 22

V. Ancient Assyrian alphabet — 54 113 160 104 26 147 131 92 153

W. Informed, current (3 words) — 53 186 75 166 138 6 89 77 9

X. Achieves — 55 103 35 20 123 11 188

Y. Booty — 56 158 66 1

Z. Bills and coos — 117 78 71 49 21 180

a. Practice piece, musically speaking — 81 130 121 61 33

b. Picasso, geometrically speaking — 181 176 4 51 172 118

c. Sinclair's given name — 84 65 52 163 24

d. Drove from the field — 69 124 133 136 156 184

e. River in western Austria — 41 102 125

f. Some call it redistribution — 122 2 93 63 187

g. Jewish learning center — 109 179 145 91 115 25 37

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to last issue's Trans-O-Gram. LONGFELLOW: *Paul Revere's Ride*: "So through the night rode Paul Revere; / And so through the night went his cry of alarm / To every Middlesex village and farm— / A cry of defiance and not of fear, / A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door, / And a word that shall echo forevermore!"

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

The End of Right and Wrong?

NEW YORK, JUNE 17

There's a mini-blizzard going on that questions whether our moral sanity is askew. Let me illustrate.

1. On Sunday, Dan Rather has as his guest Stephen Jones. Mr. Jones is the man who defended Timothy McVeigh. It is a remarkable performance, in which Jones emerges as a masterly thespian. He even obliges CBS by pretending to have become unaware of the camera's presence while he more or less practices his charge to the jury urging it to spare McVeigh the death house.

Then later he takes Dan Rather's questions. Rather asks whether Jones will agree that blowing up an office building and killing 168 people can be classified as an "evil" deed. Jones equivocates. Rather asks, Assuming McVeigh did do the deed, which was of course the verdict of the jury, would Mr. Jones then agree that he committed an evil act? Well, Jones says, McVeigh is not an evil person. The viewer is left at the mercy of the syllogism: a) McVeigh is not an evil person. b) If McVeigh was responsible for the Oklahoma bombing, then c) that bombing was not evil.

What could Dan Rather do in such a bind? Shoot the mouthpiece?

2. James Q. Wilson, the illustrious professor of political science currently at UCLA, has a new book called *Moral Judgment*, subtitled, *Does the Abuse Excuse Threaten Our Legal System?* In his preceding book, *The Moral Sense*, Mr. Wilson argued that the basic difference between right and wrong—between evil and goodness—inheres in human understanding. He is troubled by the apparent failure of some Americans to cope bluntly with the distinction. He cites the case of the Menendez brothers. There was no question that they had emptied a shotgun into their mother and father. But explanations given by the defense counsel succeeded in causing enough jurors to believe that the brothers were incompetent to judge right and wrong to bring on a divided verdict.

3. We learn from The Free Press publishing company that David Gelernter of Yale University, a brilliant specialist on computer science, has written a book called *Drawing Life*. Listen to the publisher's letter: "On June 24, 1993, David Gelernter opened a package that exploded, blowing off most of his right hand and damaging his hearing, eyesight, and chest. Ironically, the perpetrator, the Luddite 'mad genius' we know as the Unabomber managed to punish one of the very few people who is [*sic*] deeply skeptical about computers and openly critical of technology. In a haunting memoir, Gelernter makes a metaphor of himself, seeing in his own near death and recovery the same disfigurement and promise for American society as a whole. As he ponders his own spiritual blindness, and the healing power of family, religion, community, and art, he critiques the American soul and its devaluing of these very treasures. . . . Americans have made a media circus out of evil."

4. And from the gifted writer and social critic Florence King, writing in these pages. "The Nineties have blurred the original distinction between sympathy and empathy and the dictionaries have followed suit, but just for old times' sake, here it is: We sympathize with people whose troubles are different from ours; we empathize with people in the same boat. 'I feel your pain' is empathy, but 'I can imagine your pain' is sympathy."

"The people most likely to go on an empathy jag are those who personalize every problem, reduce every experience to its most pedestrian component parts, and get so caught up in the particulars of a situation that they cannot see the universal principle. Reading Margaret Carlson's column [in *Time* magazine] on Lt. Kelly Flinn is like reading half of Charles Lamb's essay on roast pig: we are left wondering whether the Chinese peasants will ever figure out fire, or will they just go on burning down their barns whenever they want cooked meat. Painting Lt. Flinn as the victim of 'a louse so low he makes George Costanza look like Sir Galahad,' Miss Carlson asks: 'Why wasn't she given counseling, a reprimand, or reassignment?' Reassignment? Doesn't she know that no matter where they stationed her, every wife on the base would empathize with Catherine of Aragon?"

Tough stuff, but how badly we need it, in an age in which there are those reluctant to consider McVeigh evil, confused about whether the Menendez Brothers should be restrained, worried about the Unabomber's psychological privations, and incapable of frowning on the conduct of Miss Flinn. □

"I know it's way past closing time, but I'm really enjoying this."

The Hard Plight Of the Teachers

NEW YORK, JUNE 20

Quarrels touching on education are of two kinds. The first has to do with pedagogical techniques: Does the look–say approach to learning to read work? The fight over the question is ever so lasting. As has been the fight over learning algebra, engendered in Oklahoma under the spur of John Saxon, a crusty West Point graduate who established, year after year, that students who used his textbooks and followed his techniques—learned mathematics.

The second front on which the teachers are engaged is the much broader question of charter schools. A charter school is what evolves when an entrepreneur, backed by a substantial body of dissatisfied parents, puts in to be permitted to operate a school over which he and the board will have total control. Such schools may even be allowed to run a profit from the fees paid over by the state's treasury in sums equal to what would be paid to public school. The evidence is overwhelming that the public schools fear the charter schools as witches are legendarily afraid of water—the Wicked Witch of the West melted away under contact with water; and the underperforming public school, in competition with the charter school, can fear a diminishing patronage year after year.

The third implied assault on the public schools has of course to do with vouchers, available to religiously oriented schools. The frenzied general opposition in ideological quarters to the voucher system is couched in terms of fear of a church's capture of children's souls, leading to an established church, in violation of the First Amendment

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protections against establishment of religion. Primarily, we are speaking of the Catholic Church, since it is the Catholics who, because of their huge commitments to schooling of the last century, are left with under-utilized facilities. Forty per cent of the schoolchildren of Chicago have parents or, more frequently, a single parent, who scrape together the money necessary to send them to parochial schools, whose performance at the end of the year hugely outdistances that of corresponding public schools. In New York City 85 per cent of parochial-school graduates go on to college, as compared to 20 per cent of public-school graduates.

Comes time, then, for political activity to protect the interests of the public schools. Here is a paradox. A survey done by the (Washington-based) National Center for Education Information tells us that among public-school teachers, 42 per cent are Democrats, 30 per cent are Republicans, 28 per cent independents. Yet the two organizations that represent the teachers, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, spent a huge $2.3 million and $1.6 million respectively in the last campaign and 99 per cent of the money went to Democratic candidates.

Now the famous *Beck* decision of 1988 requires an accounting to union members of that money which is spent on bargaining in the interests of the union members (higher wages, shorter hours, greater benefits). That's okay, according to the law. What isn't okay is to use union dues to support a political party or a political agenda. The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation has been pursuing the right of American workers, including schoolteachers, to protect themselves from political usurpation, and is in court in one hundred different cases at this moment. The particular problem the Foundation has in dealing with the teachers is the assumption promoted by the NEA and the AFT that teachers are voluntary members of private organizations and don't therefore have legal grounds to reclaim the portions of their dues used for political activities.

The reply of the National Right to Work people is: Stuff and nonsense; and litigation is at an advanced stage in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Washington. The position of the Right to Work group is that for all intents and purposes teachers operate under union-shop conditions and should be masters of the political fate of their own money.

What's especially distressing in this picture is the entire context of the teaching profession. Here are men and women prepared to devote their lives to passing along their patrimony, and that patrimony consists not only of a knowledge of the alphabet and of the findings of Euclid. It consists also of the love of traditional American ideals, which include patriotism, independence, and some sense of the spiritual concerns that enlightened the thought of our forefathers. The notion that this American clerisy should be tossed around by job-seekers whose concerns are primarily for power and economic advantage reduces the high calling of the teacher to a technocratic level of servitude that can't, in the long term, win significant support. But it is a long long war, with a great deal at stake. □

The nth Vacation, Where to go, What to do?

NEW YORK, JULY 1

I have been on vacation (one week) and feel that diffident whiff one gets on reopening the typewriter after letting it rust for a week. The notion of a vacation has had difficult times, especially with wrought-up journalists who seem to think that if anybody needs a vacation, it is the world, not the journalist. That's true, of course, but the welfare state has never got its hands on the globe, which spins along impervious to parietal conventions of earthlings.

But I am tempted to pass along some wisdom in the matter which when I read it forty years ago left me numb with shock and amazement. The profile was of lexicographer Bergen Evans, who with his sister, operating mostly out of Northwestern University in Chicago, brought out volume after (readable) volume on correct English usage. Evans was a splendid scholar with a terrific ear, and though he lacked the colorful bite of Fowler, he is enduringly useful. What Mr. Evans said about vacation travel was that, as he got on in age, he consulted with his wife and they determined that they would not spend their vacations traveling.

Now any such declaration sounds insurrectionary, so much is travel associated with vacation. But Mr. Evans was saying something Americans have a difficult time confronting. It is that the thrill of a great production of nature or of art can indeed be safely taken for granted in the mind's eye. Suppose your house were situated a few blocks from Niagara Falls. Would you view the Falls routinely—or, more likely, only when a visitor came around who said, Please show me the Falls?

Mr. Evans was saying that the pleasure of travel derives primarily from exposing the myriad accomplishments of nature and of art. But he is saying more, namely that he needs not revisit the Parthenon in order to delight in what is there. He is claiming something of the photographic memory the poet or the lawyer might have, allowing him to pull from memory the exact words put together by a genius. Ludwig von Beethoven lost his hearing, but no one questions that he "heard" the music he wrote.

Curiosity of another order has got to activate a fifth trip to Hong Kong, wouldn't you say? This time around was from JFK to Istanbul. This distance, the little chart on the airplane tells you, is 5,009 miles. Is the sensation of boarding in New York and debarking in Istanbul sufficient to activate those juices that lead you to take vacations? Or are you likelier, at a certain point, to say: The flight itself is of zero interest; indeed of negative interest. The arrival takes me to see things I have seen and have exploited to the extent I am inclined to exploit them. Therefore—Bergen Evans is not easy to answer on this point—therefore, what you most get from your vacation is 1) the pursuit of your own work; and 2) collateral reading.

If Patrick O'Brian does not get the Nobel Prize for literature, I'll lend my name to any call to boycott it. It was bad that it missed Ezra Pound and Jorge Luis Borges and Vladimir Nabokov, but Patrick O'Brian is quite simply the most original, most resourceful, most word-gifted entertainer since Dickens, and I owe to my vacation the reading of two of his sixteen books on the life of Jack Aubrey, a British naval officer, and Stephen Maturin, his surgeon, naturalist, and philosopher. Then too I began Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. How can you begrudge a vacation that introduces you to "a more sober and accurate language" in dealing with the size of Rome? The reader "may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome, by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended, in length, more than three thousand miles from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was situated in the finest part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degree of northern latitude; and that it was supposed to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well cultivated land." That's the tiniest hunk of *The Decline and Fall*, but enough to remind us that, after a while, vacations begin at home. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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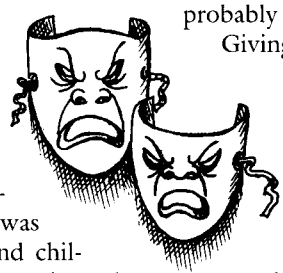
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

TOWARD the end of his life when his health had begun to break down, my fellow misanthrope Evelyn Waugh wrote his friend, Nancy Mitford: "I'm quite deaf now. Such a comfort." I wish I could say the same as we prepare for our national conversation on race, but unfortunately I have ears like a lynx.

I didn't always hate the sound of the human voice. As a college student in the Fifties I ran with arty bohemians, a dependably garrulous breed, staying up all night in shabby apartments amid Toulouse-Lautrec posters and orange-crate bookcases, drinking muscatel and talking intensely about "life."



By "life" we really meant our own lives, which is what made our marathon soul-searching so enjoyable. We were the last generation of wannabe intellectuals to celebrate selfishness. We thought Gauguin was right to abandon his wife and children and run away to Tahiti, we cheered Sherwood Anderson's walk down the railroad tracks into a new life, and we did not care how much adulterous havoc George Sand wreaked. Nothing mattered to us except cultivating the garden of our salad days; we would have sacrificed anybody for a chance to live in Europe "for a year," justifying it with the self-evident principle that creative people must put themselves first.

Then came the Sixties. Suddenly, intellectuals were no longer selfish and soul-searching was no longer arty. As altruistic hippies and utopian radicals replaced bohemian blithe spirits, discourse among the avant garde degenerated into self-flagellating confessions, consciousness-raising, and wrangles about bus schedules for Freedom Rides and which Safeways to target for boycotts of lettuce and grapes.

When the black-turtleneck-sweater crowd donned tie-dyes and took up selfless martyrdom, I found myself cut off from the writer's natural milieu. I enjoyed blithe spirits and outrageous nonconformists, but now their opinions set my teeth on edge. I liked the freemasonry of artists with their easy assumptions of superiority, but now they all believed in equality. I wasn't cut out to be a hippie, but neither was I cut out to be a Republican committeewoman. Where could I turn for stimulating conversation?

I solved the problem by keeping a foot in both camps, becoming an anti-intellectual intellectual, a right-wing feminist, and an elitist conservative—three guaranteed ways to end up with no one to talk to at all, which is probably why I did it.

Giving up talking is the smartest thing I ever did. Take, for example, the widespread assumption that writers need to talk often with all kinds of people to master the "give and take" of human exchange. I believed this myself for years, but now I know it's not true. Writing and talking don't mix, and in fact war against each other. Every fledgling writer soon learns that trying to reproduce "the way people really talk" results in unreadable dialogue. It also works the other way around, as the Rambling Wreck from Arkansas has demonstrated. Bill Clinton's 1969 letter thanking the ROTC colonel for saving him from the draft was full of repellent sentiments, but they were well-expressed. It was a good letter because it did not sound like the way people really talk. But now, after years of incessant talking, everything Clinton says sounds like bad writing.

"It's really about listening," said John Kasich of the proposed national conversation on race. Exactly. A writer who listens to America talking does so at his peril. The first principle of art is selectivity; "Achilles' rage alone, when wrought with skill, abundantly does a whole Iliad fill," advised Boileau. American conversation being all about healing power, its first principle issues from therapists, facilitators, and every woman's best girlfriend: "Start at the beginning and don't leave anything out."

For all our eagerness to heal with words, the average American utterance can be jarring. This is probably caused by continuous exposure to bereaved families trying to cram into a sound bite their pleas for a) mercy, b) justice, or c) privacy.

"Remember always never to bring a tame in union with a savage thing," advised Horace. When a prisoner on Maryland's death row chose gas over lethal injection to force the authorities to witness painful capital punishment, Kathie O'Donnell of the Public Defender's Office explained, "This is a brutal act, he doesn't want them to sort of redefine the act by making it seem like he's going to sleep."

YOU don't say "sort of" when talking about savage things, but Americans always insert these stool softeners to avoid sounding too blunt and direct. Even some columnists are doing it now. I have seen the softening "sort of" in columns, along with "Correct me if I'm wrong" (Okay, you're wrong), and "I hate to say it" (Then don't).

"Neither a talker nor a listener be," advised King. My decision to go Trappist was reinforced last year when I got a message from Mary Matalin's show inviting me to "talk about your review of Hillary Clinton's book." This should not have hit me as strongly as it did. I get enough requests for personal appearances to have kept my cool, but I reacted instead like the heroine of a gothic novel who has to get thrown down a well, locked in the attic, and smothered by a fallen canopy before she finally says "Suddenly, I realized . . . "

How can you talk about what you have already written? How can extemporaneous speech possibly improve and clarify something that took you three days of revising, polishing, and fine-tuning to get exactly right? Writing is the ultimate self-expression, but letting an idea stand in pristine—i.e., written—form offends an oral culture. Nothing is final until we render it fleeting; nothing makes sense until we confuse it; nothing is lively until we kill it.

Nonetheless, there's hope. Have you noticed how often the new buzzword, "closure," has been cropping up lately? It may be a subconscious way of saying everybody shut up. □

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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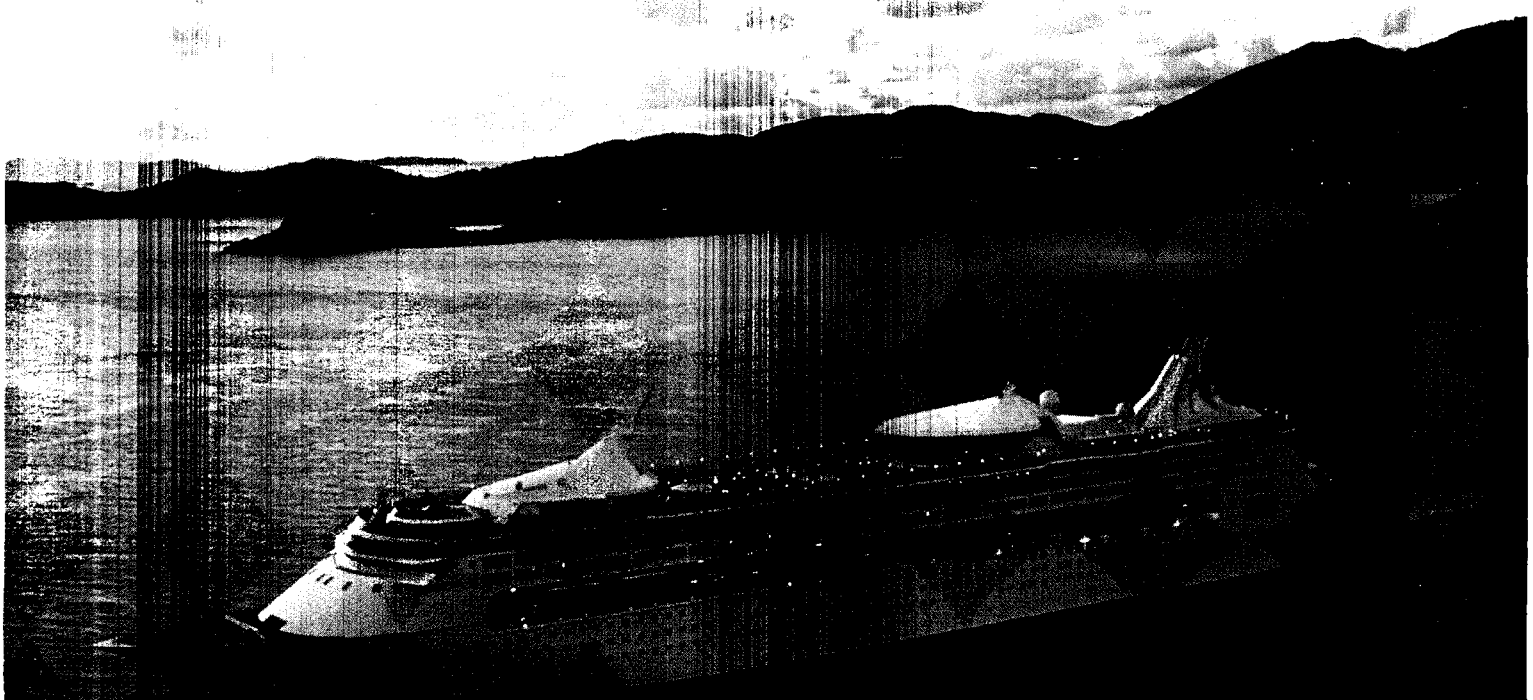

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